HALL OF FAME ISSUE

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The Ring

MUHAMMAD ALI
POSTER INSIDE

"YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE BEST OF ME. EVERY FIGHT I KEEP GETTING BETTER, AND I HOPE THIS ONE BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME."

"THIS FIGHT IS SPECIAL AND HAS MOTIVATED ME TO TRAIN HARD. ON MAY 6, I WILL BE 100 PERCENT."

MANO A MANO

P.32

CANELO VS. CHAVEZ JR.

JULY 2017

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MEXICAN RIVALRIES

A LOOK BACK AT FIVE EPIC MATCHUPS P. 38

HOLYFIELD, BARRERA

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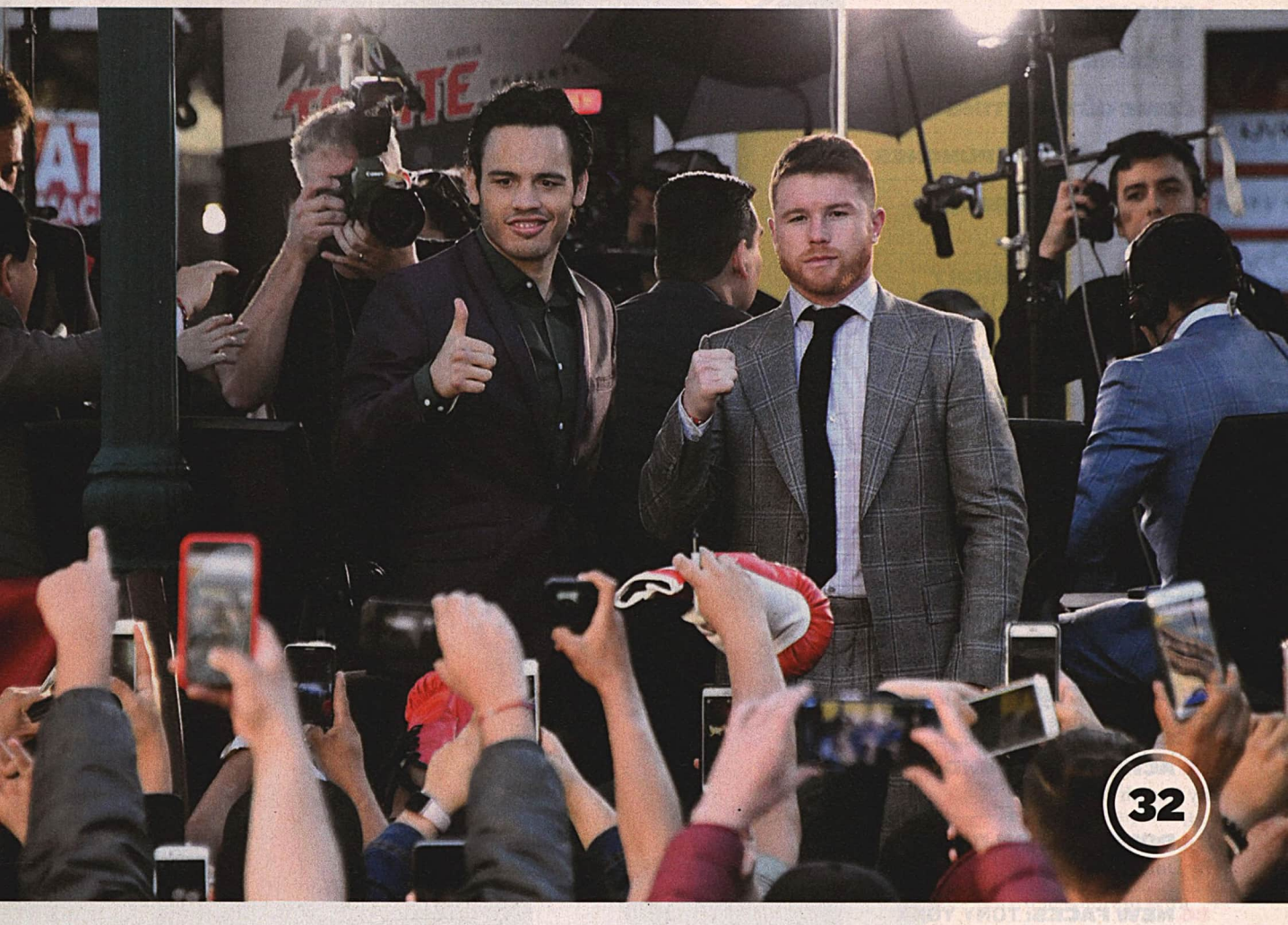

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. (left) and Canelo Alvarez will be in in the spotlight again on May 6.

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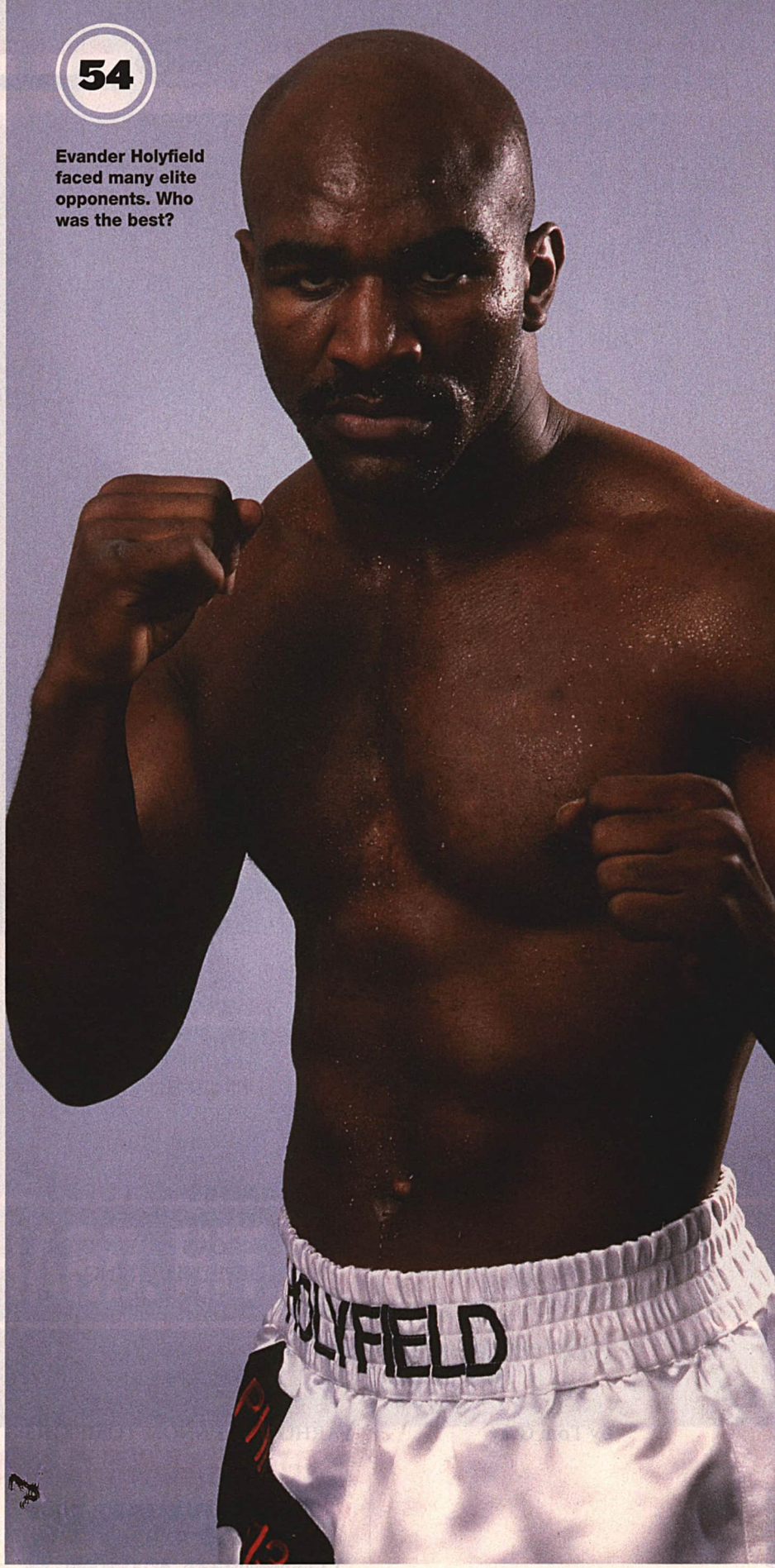

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PERSISTENT PROBLEM

The debate over same-day vs. day-before weigh-ins will never go away because there is no perfect solution.

The issue came up again before Gennady Golovkin fought Daniel Jacobs in March, when a second, same-day weigh-in – with a limit of 170 pounds – was required to fight for GGG's IBF middleweight title. Jacobs refused to be weighed again and entered the ring with a weight advantage of as many as 10 pounds.

That disparity brought out critics who said Jacobs had an unfair edge, that, in effect, GGG was fighting a cruiserweight. Some even suggested boxing go back to same-day weigh-ins, which made such disparities far more unlikely.

So which is preferable: same-day or day-before weigh-ins? There is no easy answer to that question.

I lean toward the current system. I think day-before weigh-ins serve their purpose: Fighters who deprive themselves of liquid and other nutrients to make weight – which has always been a part of boxing – are less vulnerable on fight night because they have time to fully rehydrate.

Yes, the fact some fighters will have a weight advantage – sometimes a large advantage – at fight time arguably creates a new safety risk. That's the drawback of day-before weigh-ins.

I look at it this way, though: One, assuming both fighters actually make the official weight the day before the fight, they have the same opportunity to rehydrate to a more natural weight. And, two, I believe the danger of extreme dehydration – which has played a role in brain injuries – supersedes inevitable weight advantages.

IBF officials would suggest they and others who require a second weigh-in are on the right track, putting a limit on how much a fighter can rehydrate, but I think that only hinders a fighter's ability to enter the ring at full strength.

Former ring doctor Margaret Goodman, for whom I have tremendous respect, once told me that she leans toward same-day weigh-ins – while acknowledging the complexity of the issue – because fighters too often torture themselves to make weight.

That practice, she said, can result in one of two things: It will harm the fighter or give him or her the unfair advantage we've discussed.

There are compelling arguments on both sides.

I believe there is only one solution with which everyone can agree but is unlikely to become reality: A change of culture. Boxers should be encouraged by those close to them to fight at their natural weight, which would instantly put dehydration and wide weight disparities behind us.

"That would be the solution," Goodman said. "Trainers and fighters need to understand what the dangers are and do the smart thing."

That won't happen on a wide scale because boxers believe fighting in a division or even two below their natural weight will give them a strength advantage. Or sometimes they find more lucrative fights at lower weights, which is incentive to torture oneself and then rehydrate.

Thus, the day-before vs. day-of argument will continue. And we'll continue to explore it on these pages. RING

Shinsuke Yamanaka (left) extended his long reign as WBC bantamweight titleholder by stopping Carlos Carlson on March 2, Yamanaka's 12th successful defense.

TEIKEI

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COME OUT WRITING

NO GUARANTEES

As if we needed another reminder, the fights of March 18 proved once again that boxing can be cruel. Roman Gonzalez lost his perfect record and Gennady Golovkin eked out a close decision victory over Daniel Jacobs. Although both decisions were controversial, one thing remains unequivocal: Both elite talents were given much tougher fights than expected. That is further evidence that even the best fighters on the planet can struggle on any given night. If you're not on your "A" game and your opponent executes the right game plan, you can lose, regardless of how much "better" you are. But we have to remember that it's not always a bad thing when the giants of the sport appear vulnerable. It just reminds us that anything can happen inside the ring. And it's precisely that unpredictability that makes boxing so captivating.

Jamie Rebner
Montreal

A PLAN FOR GGG

I'd like to see four fights for Gennady Golovkin in 2017: Daniel Jacobs, Billy Joe Saunders in June, Canelo Alvarez in September and then maybe Chris Eubank Jr. or Jermall Charlo in December. That would be great. If Gennady beats them all, then it would be time for him to move up to super middleweight in 2018 to fight Gilberto Ramirez and James DeGale in an attempt to clean up that division as well. Then he can call it a career.

Harry Pospekhin
Moscow

GREAT EXPERIENCE

I've watched as the boxing fan base has declined. After I experienced first-hand the Deontay Wilder-Gerald Washington fight at Legacy Arena in Birmingham, Alabama, my first fight in person, I only wish more people could experience how incredible it is. It was like nothing I had ever seen – the crowd, the smells, the noise. There's nothing I've experienced quite like it. It's addicting. And I can't wait until the next fight comes to Alabama. Thank you guys for helping fans like myself stay on top of the great sport of boxing.

Parker Woody
Alabaster, Alabama

LEONARD WON

Marvin Hagler is my favorite fighter of all time. It still pains me to watch his fight against Sugar Ray Leonard – "The Debate Rages On," May 2017 – because as many times as I've tried to convince myself Hagler was robbed, nope, he was soundly beaten by a superior boxer. Leonard was the best fighter of the '80s. All this nonsense about the challenger "taking the title" is whining by Hagler loyalists. Fights are scored round by round, 10-point must. Hagler certainly was the aggressor, but it wasn't effective aggression. Leonard's superior defense was the difference. Hagler believed he could nullify that defense and gave Leonard every concession in negotiations: the smaller gloves, bigger ring and 12 rounds instead of 15, effectively losing the fight when the contract was signed.

Brad Morris
Astoria, New York

ALI NO. 1

When we discuss the greatest fighters of all time, I think there are two ways to look at it. One, how good were they at their best? And, two, how good was their total body of work? Using either criterion, Muhammad Ali is clearly the greatest of all time. On his finest day, his speed, athleticism, heart and chin would be too much for any other heavyweight. Looking at the Top 20 list – in "The Greatest Heavyweights of All Time," May 2017 – there is not a heavyweight there who could have dealt with Ali's total package.

Mike Arena
East Amherst, New York

JACK JOHNSON

The heavyweights poll was excellent, with great names all the way through. One name that always comes up in everyone's Top 5 is Jack Johnson. I watch old film of him and I think today, if he were a bit heavier, he would cause some real problems. I know we shouldn't compare eras but he obviously did have great defense, stamina and guts. I love those old photos of him in THE RING Magazine.

Ray Fox
Keighley, England

MORE HEAVYWEIGHTS

I really enjoyed reading what the experts think about the greats of the heavyweight division. One thing I really agreed with was Joe Louis being the best ever up to that time. The only two fighters I would give a chance against Louis would be Jack Johnson and Gene Tunney, because of their boxing ability. One of my big questions is how can you rate Marciano at No. 4 while Ezzard Charles and Jersey Joe Walcott were not even on the list? They both beat Marciano soundly for the majority of their fights even though they were well past their primes. Muhammad Ali was unquestionably the greatest ever.

Mark McKee
Dallas

WHAT ABOUT EDDIE?

Editor's note: In the May 2017 issue, the subject of our monthly 10 list was boxers who fought in many different countries. Promoter J Russell Peltz wrote us with a simple question: "Ever hear of Eddie Perkins?" Of course we had. We just didn't realize that he might've been the most prolific road warrior in history. The two-time junior welterweight titleholder fought in 24 countries outside his native U.S., seven more than the fighter who topped our list, DeMarcus Corley. We have more respect for the gifted Hall of Famer than ever.

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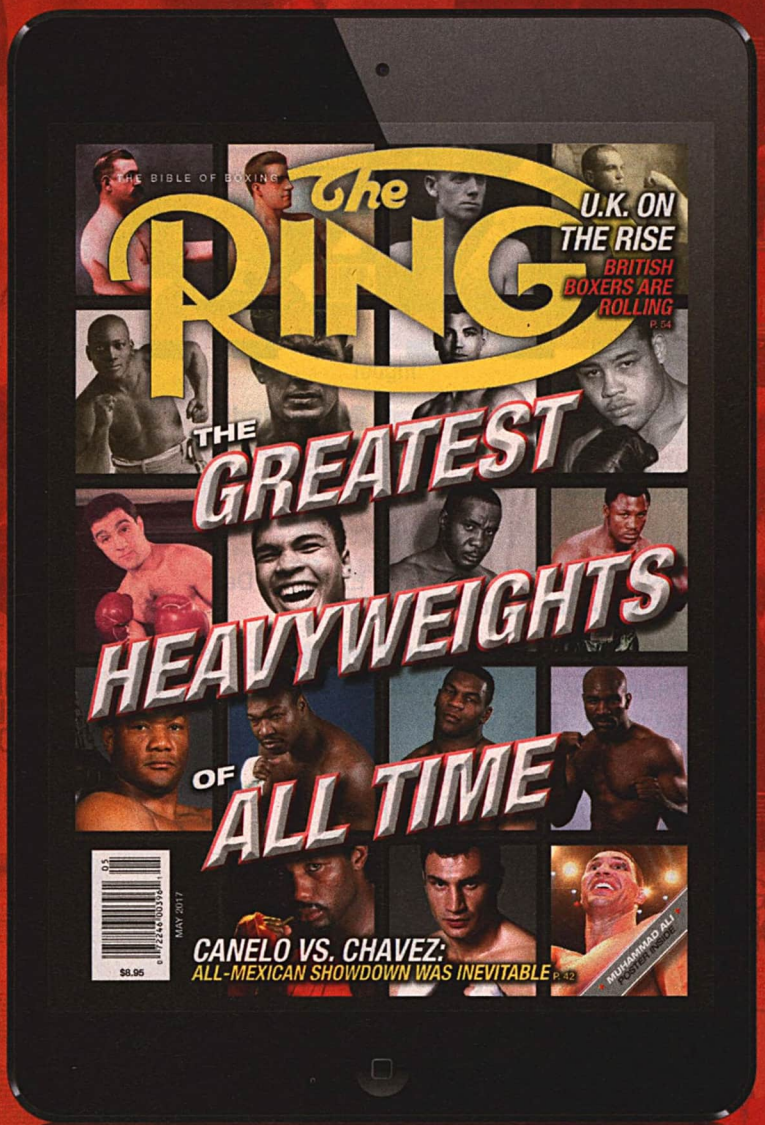

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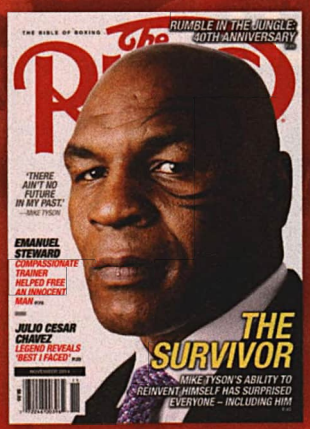

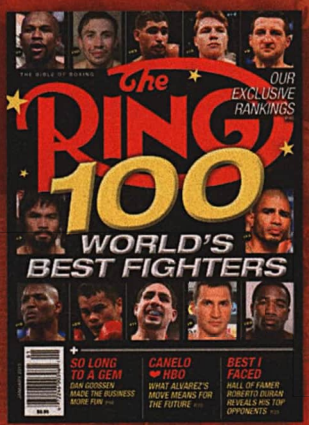

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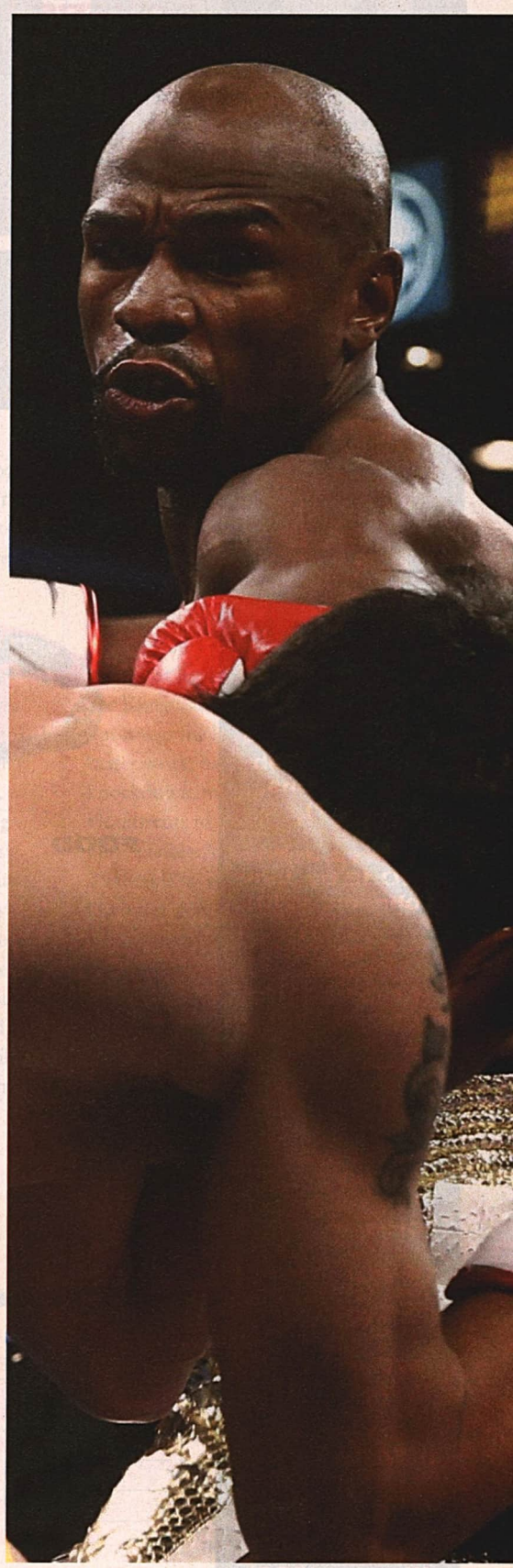
ADVANCED DEGREES

You might be surprised that we were able to connect the best female fighter of all time to the best male fighter of his era.

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, regular contributor Gregg Morgan came up with an unusual one. He connected the consensus greatest female boxer of all time, Lucia Rijker, with Floyd Mayweather Jr., the best of his era. The key link is a 1999 fight between female Margaret MacGregor and male Loi Chow, won by MacGregor.

LUCIA RIJKER
fought
CHEVELLE HALLBACK,
who fought
SNODENE BLAKENEY,
who fought
MARGARET MACGREGOR,
who fought
LOI CHOW,
who fought
ED KO,
who fought
LANCE HOLCOMB,
who fought
CESAR GUZMAN,
who fought
JUSTIN JUUKO,
who fought
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.



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A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

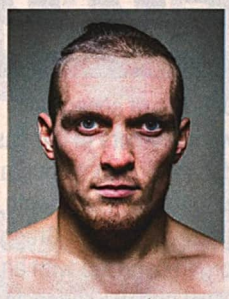
This month: If Wladimir Klitschko is able to upset Anthony Joshua on April 29, Joshua will have suffered the first loss of his career. He wouldn't be the first former or current heavyweight beltholder to suffer his first defeat in a heavyweight title fight. These are the first 10 who did.

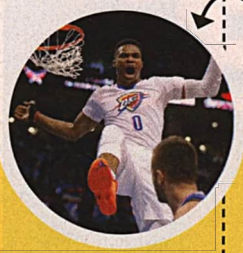
1. **John L. Sullivan** (KO 21 by James J. Corbett, 1892)
2. **James J. Corbett** (KO 14 by Bob Fitzsimmons, 1897)
3. **James J. Jeffries** (TKO 15 by Jack Johnson, 1910)
4. **Ingemar Johansson** (KO 5 by Floyd Patterson, 1960)
5. **Muhammad Ali** (L 15 Joe Frazier, 1971)
6. **Joe Frazier** (TKO 2 by George Foreman, 1973)
7. **George Foreman** (KO 8 by Ali, 1974)
8. **Leon Spinks** (L 15 Ali, 1978)
9. **Gerry Coetzee** (L 15 John Tate, 1979)
10. **John Tate** (KO 15 by Mike Weaver, 1980)

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

— Anson Wainwright

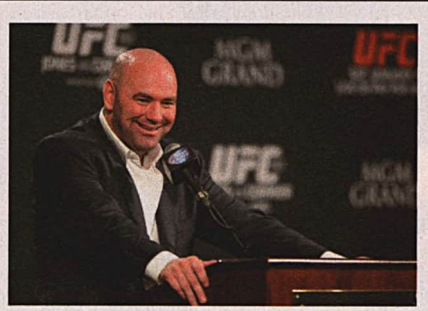


FIGHTER	OLEKSANDR USYK CRUISERWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER	DIEGO MAGDALENO LIGHTWEIGHT CONTENDER	RYOICHI TAGUCHI JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER
MUSIC	"It depends on my mood at the moment. But I like good music."	"I listen to a lot of rap and EDM (electronic dance music), a mixture of both. Artists like Jaws and Carnage."	"I love a song called 'Neiro' written, produced and performed by Kreva, who is one of the most famous rap/hip-hop musicians in Japan."
CAR	"Toyota Land Cruiser 200."	"I have a 2012 Infiniti M series, then I have my classic 1968 Ford Galaxie, and I have a Jeep Wrangler that I bring out to camp. My dream car would be an early **'90s Porsche 911**; that's been a dream car ever since I was a kid."	"I do not own any car, since I got my driving license just in July. But I might … buy a blue-colored Subaru Impreza since I love it."
FOOD	"Pasta. I really like pasta verrrry much, and fish as well."	"I'm a big fan of **cheesecake.**"	"I love ramen noodles. If I am not [training] for a bout, I love to explore various ramen restaurants."
TATTOOS	"Names of my kids, Olympic rings, some other ones symbolizing memorable moments that happened in my life."	"I don't have any; my father would kill me if I did."	"I do not have any tattoos. Most Japanese boxers do not have tattoos."
ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	"I like football (soccer), Wayne Rooney."	"I'm gonna go with Kobe Bryant."  "'End of Watch.'"	"My favorite athletes outside boxing are **Russell Westbrook** and Stephen Curry of the NBA."
MOVIE	"'Law Abiding Citizen.'"		"I love the series of Spider-Man, since they are very thrilling."
VIDEO GAME	"I'm not a gamer."	"I'm really not into games."	"I always played a game called 'NBA Live' since I like basketball. I loved also **'Final Fantasy VII.'** I am looking forward to playing the PS4 remake very much."

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH By Michael Rosenthal

GOOD

The **Keith Thurman-Danny Garcia** fight on March 4 in Brooklyn was disappointing given the pre-fight hype but one very good thing came out of it: A peak of 5.1 million and an average of 3.74 million people watched the primetime main event on CBS, according to Showtime, a division of the larger network. That, Showtime said, was the largest audience for a primetime fight on any network since 1998. Those numbers suggest that boxing can succeed on free television if a matchup is compelling (and Thurman vs. Garcia certainly was), is marketed well and is shown at an optimal time of day. The Thurman-Garcia broadcast started at 9 p.m. ET. I trust that the higher-ups at CBS were pleased and will televise more fights in primetime. And I can only hope that Thurman-Garcia opened the eyes of executives at other networks who might not have known that boxing has more universal appeal than many seem to assume. The downside is that the main event didn't live up to expectations, as the victorious Thurman fought more carefully than we would've liked. That might've turned off some of those who tuned in. It wasn't the disaster Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao was, though. Overall, it was a good night for boxing.



BAD

I was watching UFC President **Dana White** on the Conan O'Brien show when something remarkable happened: White actually talked out of his ass. He told O'Brien's audience, get this, that UFC star Conor McGregor would have a good chance of beating Floyd Mayweather Jr. in a boxing ring because of his size and youth. At first, I was amazed; then I just laughed. Who knew that White is a comedian? And then I read that McGregor said, "Watch me take over boxing, trust me on that. No one in this boxing game knows what's coming. When I step in, I'm going to shock the whole goddamn world. Look me in the eyes – 28 years of age, confident as a motherfucker." Another comedian. I should thank both of them for making me smile. OK, this really isn't bad unless you actually believe this malarkey. White and McGregor are doing their job; they're promoting a superfight that appears more likely to happen as time passes. And they're doing it well, building interest even though everyone already knows the result. And while I'm chuckling now, McGregor will get the last laugh. He'll walk away with $50 million or more.

WORSE

I can't be too critical of the judges for the **Roman Gonzalez-Srisaket Sor Rungvisai** fight because they scored the fight in unison, which is the goal of every state commission. One judge scored the junior bantamweight title fight a draw (113-113) while the other two had it 114-112 in favor of Sor Rungvisai. And the three judges scored nine of the 12 rounds exactly the same, including the last four rounds (all scored for Sor Rungvisai). That's consistency. The problem was they got it wrong, at least in my opinion. I realize that Sor Rungvisai took the fight to Gonzalez but it was the latter who did more and better work, battling through a first-round knockdown, multiple head-butts and two bloody cuts to control the fight. CompuBox numbers aren't definitive but they provide a valuable layer of information. And Gonzalez dominated them. He threw more punches (1,013-940), landed more punches overall (441-284) and landed more power punches (372-277). That 372 figure is a record for the division. Still, the judges handed the No. 1 fighter in the world his first defeat. I'm not angry, I'm not frustrated. I'm just baffled. Controversial decisions were, are and always will be part of boxing because scoring is subjective. That doesn't make them easy to swallow, though. Terrible way for a great fighter to lose for the first time.

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

In light of Srisaket Sor Rungvisai's victory over Roman Gonzalez, the then-king of boxing, we asked the obvious question: **Who is the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter in the world?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES

27.58	GENNADY GOLOVKIN
20.11	VASYL LOMACHENKO
12.23	MANNY PACQUIAO
10.76	ANDRE WARD
6.24	ROMAN GONZALEZ
5.08	TERENCE CRAWFORD
3.61	CANELO ALVAREZ
3.22	SERGEY KOVALEV
2.77	GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
2.28	MIKEY GARCIA
1.48	OTHER
1.05	KELL BROOK
.91	ERROL SPENCE
.84	NAOYA INOUE
.67	KEITH THURMAN
.46	CARL FRAMPTON
.35	JORGE LINARES
.25	SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
.11	LEO SANTA CRUZ

NOTE: 2,854 READERS VOTED

By David Greisman

Danny Garcia (left) hadn't faced a serious test in almost two years when he stepped into the ring to face Keith Thurman.

BOUND TO HAPPEN

DANNY GARCIA WAS ILL-PREPARED FOR **KEITH THURMAN** AFTER A STRING OF EASY FIGHTS

Danny Garcia came to be derided as a cherry-picker, someone who purposefully faced lesser fighters he knew he could beat rather than tackle real opposition.

That criticism wasn't completely fair. He was the former junior welterweight champion, after all. He'd beaten Amir Khan back when that still meant something. He'd taken a close but clear one over Lucas Matthysse, executing a smart game plan and earning the top spot at 140 pounds.

That criticism wasn't completely wrong either. In the three years since Matthysse, the best you could say about Garcia was that he'd faced Lamont Peterson and Mauricio Herrera and been fortunate to win decisions over both.

He'd infamously knocked out Rod Salka, stopped Paulie Malignaggi after Shawn Porter had already done the same, outpointed Robert Guerrero for an absolute gift of a vacant world title and stopped Samuel Vargas – whom Errol Spence had previously obliterated – in a matchup so disappointing that even the WBC wouldn't sanction it as a title defense.

Vargas was a letdown after rumors that Garcia would face Andre Berto. How low have you stooped when people are upset that you didn't face Andre Berto?

Thurman, who'd called out Garcia, once tweeted a photo of "Cherry Garcia" with Garcia's face affixed to a pint of Ben and Jerry's. It was fitting, given the foes that Garcia iced, creamed, whipped and bowled over.

Those easy evenings helped make for a hard night against Thurman this past March. Garcia failed precisely because of how he succeeded.

That weaker opposition never made him stronger. He never had to learn. Most fighters are still able to grow through the earlier stages of

their careers. But unless you have unusual physical gifts, it's necessary to treat boxing like weightlifting – handling stiff resistance gets you in better shape.

He also didn't take the right lessons out of his struggles with Herrera and Peterson. Thurman did, however. Thurman messed with Garcia's timing just as Herrera did. He also used movement to put Garcia out of his comfort zone, just like Peterson. Garcia prefers to counterpunch. That's no secret. He looked lost once he realized his counters weren't going to land enough and that they were landing on someone who could handle his power. He couldn't adjust in time.

Perhaps next time will be better, just as was the case for Leo Santa Cruz in his rematch with Carl Frampton. But for now Garcia has a loss on his record and no title belts around his waist. Sure, those easy nights were easy money, but they were shortsighted decisions that cost him in the long-term.

★ ★ ★

Vanes Martirosyan felt he was being held back, that he wasn't getting the opportunities he deserved, especially compared with other fighters in Al Haymon's stable.

And so he parted ways with a company that has more television dates in boxing than anyone else and signed with … Don King.

Yeah, that makes sense.

This is the promotional equivalent of two perpetually single, middle-aged people deciding to settle for each other. King has done even less in recent years than Martirosyan. He has essentially been finished as a promoter for a decade. He went an extended period without even having a working website. His promotional stable was once a who's who of boxing. Now it's a "Who's that?"

King used to persuade fighters with bags of money. Now he can only offer them change purses.

★ ★ ★

Bob Arum, meanwhile, is going on much stronger than his 85-year-old former promotional rival. Top Rank has recently signed a number of 2016 Olympians, including American silver medalist Shakur Stevenson and Irish star Michael Conlan.

Arum says he wants to see them fight in five years. You'd have thought he'd already learned his lesson about marinating fights.

★ ★ ★

Promoter Bob Arum recently signed Shakur Stevenson.

For you rap fans keeping score at home, Top Rank now has Pac(quiao) and Shakur.

Please, no jokes comparing Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. to Notorious B.I.G.

★ ★ ★

Don King at least has Amir Imam, the once-highly touted junior welterweight prospect who had become mandatory challenger to Viktor Postol and then got knocked out by Adrian Granados in a stunner in 2015.

It's not so bad for Imam, even if it hasn't been good for Imam since then. All he's done is beat a designated opponent who was 16-19. Just months ago, the WBC ordered Imam to face Antonio Orozco, and then for the winner of that fight to meet whoever came out on top in a battle between Postol and an unnamed fighter.

Imam apparently doesn't need to earn anything anymore now that Orozco is a welterweight and Granados went up to 147 to lose to Adrien Broner. Imam has gone from needing to win two fights to face Postol to needing to do nothing in order to face the current titleholder, Terence Crawford.

Last year, the WBC instituted more stringent drug testing for its titleholders and Top 15 fighters. It's high time we sign the WBC officials up for drug testing themselves.

★ ★ ★

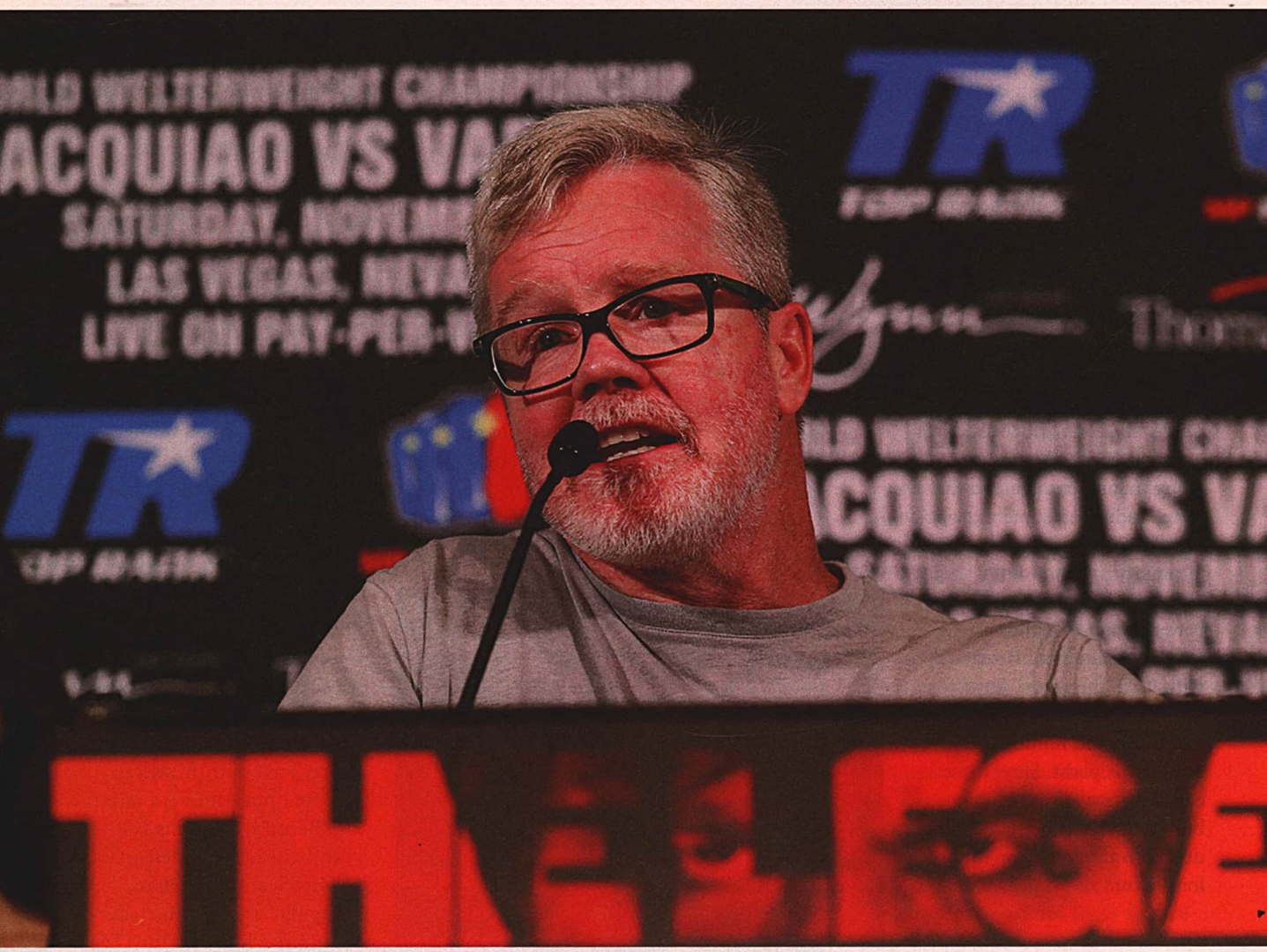
The supposed best light heavyweight in the world isn't even facing the best light heavyweight from Long Island.

Adonis Stevenson isn't facing Joe Smith Jr., who knocked out Andrzej Fonfara and Bernard Hopkins last year. Instead, he'll defend against Sean Monaghan, a popular and undefeated, yet limited fighter who spent his 2016 against guys who definitely weren't Fonfara or Hopkins.

Stevenson also owed a title shot to mandatory challenger Eleider Alvarez, who fights out of the same city (Montreal) and for the same promoter. Yet his team paid Alvarez to step aside so Adonis could face Monaghan.

Stevenson never faced Bernard Hopkins. He never faced Jean Pascal back when Pascal still mattered. He missed out on being the first person to beat Sergey Kovalev. It's not the weakest of title reigns, but it's far from the most impressive given how it started and considering Stevenson's nickname.

It's easy to call yourself Superman when you're avoiding Doomsday and Brainiac in favor of fighting the Jimmy Olsens of the world.



SOUND ADVICE

TRAINER **EDDIE FUTCH** WARNED **FREDDIE ROACH** THAT HE WAS TAKING TOO MUCH PUNISHMENT

Freddie Roach said he never thought about "being injured in a fight."

Not long ago, I was talking with Freddie Roach about Muhammad Ali, and the conversation turned to Roach's own physical condition.

Roach suffers from Parkinson's disease, which is characterized by various symptoms including, in Roach's case, visible tremors. Doctors have told him his condition was most likely caused by taking too many blows to the head during his career as a boxer.

"I never thought ever in my life about being injured in a fight," Roach said. "It never crossed my mind once. There was a time when Eddie Futch (Roach's trainer) told me that I was starting to get hit too much; it's time that I give it up. I was upset with Eddie at that point. I got a little mad. I said, 'Well, you're pretty old. Why don't you retire? I can still do this.' I fought five more fights and I lost four of the five. Then I humbly went to Eddie and asked him if I could be his assistant trainer and have a job. That changed my whole life from being a washed-up fighter to being something in life.

"I became aware of the health

issues about two years after I retired," Roach continued. "I was running with Virgil Hill up in Reno. It was a very nice place for conditioning, running, horses and so forth. I was watching a horse as we ran and I hit a hole and broke my leg. When I came out of the cast, I developed a dropped foot and then the tremors started coming. I remember the first time someone asked me about the tremors. It was a girlfriend. She said, 'Are you saying no or are you just shaking again?' I said, 'What do you mean, shaking again?' She goes, 'You shake all the time.' Then I met a couple doctors and they took me to the Mayo Clinic and they diagnosed me with Parkinson's about six months later."

★ ★ ★

Rosie Perez has had a successful career as an actress and been a prominent supporter of progressive social causes. She's also a fervent fight fan.

Looking back on her many years as a fan, Perez recently recalled, "I did not have an emotional attachment to a fight until Wilfred Benitez fought Sugar Ray Leonard. Years later, when I met Leonard, I quivered. It was at the Boxing Hall of Fame in Nevada. Ray goes, 'Are you shaking?' I said, 'Yeah.' He goes, 'Why?' I said, 'Because I'm meeting Sugar Ray Leonard, the guy who defeated Wilfred Benitez.' He looked at me and he goes, 'Who are you?' And I said, 'I cried that Wilfred lost. But I felt guilty because I really wanted you to win and I felt like I was betraying my heritage because Wilfred is a Puerto Rican.'"

Ray Leonard has his own memories of fighting Benitez. And he remembers his conversation with Perez. In fact ...

"I vividly remember that conversation with Rosie," Leonard said. "I got teary-eyed because I saw the honesty in her eyes."

★ ★ ★

Sports can lead to a loss of objectivity. That's particularly true when it comes to scoring a fight.

Lou DiBella is one of the most knowledgeable boxing people I know. Over the years, we've watched countless fights together. Our scorecards are almost always similar. Except when Lou has a significant vested interest in one of the fighters. In those instances, without fail, Lou's scorecard is more heavily weighted toward his guy than mine is.

People in a fighter's camp tend to view fights through rose-colored glasses. Almost always, their scorecards are more heavily weighted toward their fighter than the judges' scorecards and consensus media scoring. I can count on one hand the times when the opposite was true.

This phenomenon extends far beyond boxing. Jim Harbaugh isn't the only football coach who goes into conniptions and rages against the inequities of life when a penalty call goes against his team. We've come to expect similar behavior from most coaches and athletes.

That leaves open the question of whether the people involved with a fighter are oblivious to the fact that they're scoring a fight badly or refuse to acknowledge their bias. Probably it's a bit of both. It also leads me to recall a moment that highlights the respect I had for former WBC 140-pound champion Billy Costello, who died of cancer six years ago.

In 1999, at age 43, Costello made an ill-advised return to the ring to fight 39-year-old Juan LaPorte on a "legends" card in North Carolina. Billy won a split decision in a bout that most observers thought should have been scored the other way.

"To be honest with you," Costello said during a post-fight interview, "I think a draw would have been fairer."

★ ★ ★

Jerry Izenberg has written a book that's part traditional history and part memoir about what he calls "the golden age of heavyweight boxing."

"Once There Were Giants" (Skyhorse Publishing) covers the years between the 1962 heavyweight championship bout between Floyd Patterson and Sonny Liston and the 1997 "ear-bite" encounter between Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield. In Izenberg's words, these years encompassed "the greatest and most honest heavyweight era in the history of boxing."

Muhammad Ali dominates Izenberg's telling. But others get their due.

Cus D'Amato is present with Patterson at the beginning of the narrative and with Tyson – the man D'Amato wanted as his monument – at the end. Tyson and Patterson were at different points on the spectrum of D'Amato's philosophy that, "A fighter who has fear and learns to control it can conquer anything. A fighter who has no fear isn't ahead of the game. He is simply crazy."

There's also an engaging anecdote about Larry Holmes. Reaching for an explanation as to why he shoved Ken Norton during a dispute over arena access for training purposes prior to their 1978 championship fight, Holmes declared, "He was gonna shove me, so I shoved first." RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

By Bernard Hopkins, as told to Joseph Santoliquito

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

A BUSY **BERNARD HOPKINS** SAYS 'I'LL THINK ABOUT THE HALL OF FAME IN FIVE YEARS'

This is one in a series of columns by future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, who gives us his thoughts on various subjects important to every boxer and fan. This issue: not dwelling on the past or the future.

This might shock a lot of people, since I had the last fight of my career back in December, but I'm not thinking about the Hall of Fame. It's a great compliment when I get introduced and hear stuff like "future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins." But I guess you can say I live in the moment, because I'm not thinking about the Hall of Fame right now. I'll think about it when it happens five years from now.

The biggest thing I'm finding out about retirement from boxing is that I'm busier than ever, between my promotional responsibilities with Golden Boy and my commentating work with HBO. I know as a fighter I wasn't blessed with the most talent. What made me a great fighter is that I got the most out of the talent that I did have, and that meant working hard, living a disciplined life, living by a schedule and staying with a routine.

Right now, thinking about the Hall of Fame is not part of my routine.

The other thing that's happening is that I'm finally taking time to relax. When I was fighting, even during downtime between fights, I was always in the gym or staying with my routine, getting in some road work, constantly staying in shape, instead of waiting for when a fight came to train myself into shape. I'm planning on a week's vacation in the Bahamas.

Until it was just mentioned to me recently, I honestly have never thought about the Hall of Fame. That's probably because I have too much going on. For example, in one week I have to be in New York, then take a trip to Las Vegas the next day, then from there I have to run to Washington, D.C., for a fight I'm working on for HBO. That's a lot of travel. I may travel more now that I'm retired than when I was fighting. I'm doing a lot of bouncing and preparing.

This may also sound strange, but other than being introduced as "future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins," people really don't bring the Hall of Fame subject up to me that much. They really don't.

I think fighters – actually I think in all walks of life, people get too consumed with looking too far ahead or dwell on things that happened in their past. I know I'm guilty of looking back, because my past is what made my life – coming out of prison, not having a future. Maybe it's why even now I don't like thinking or planning too far ahead.

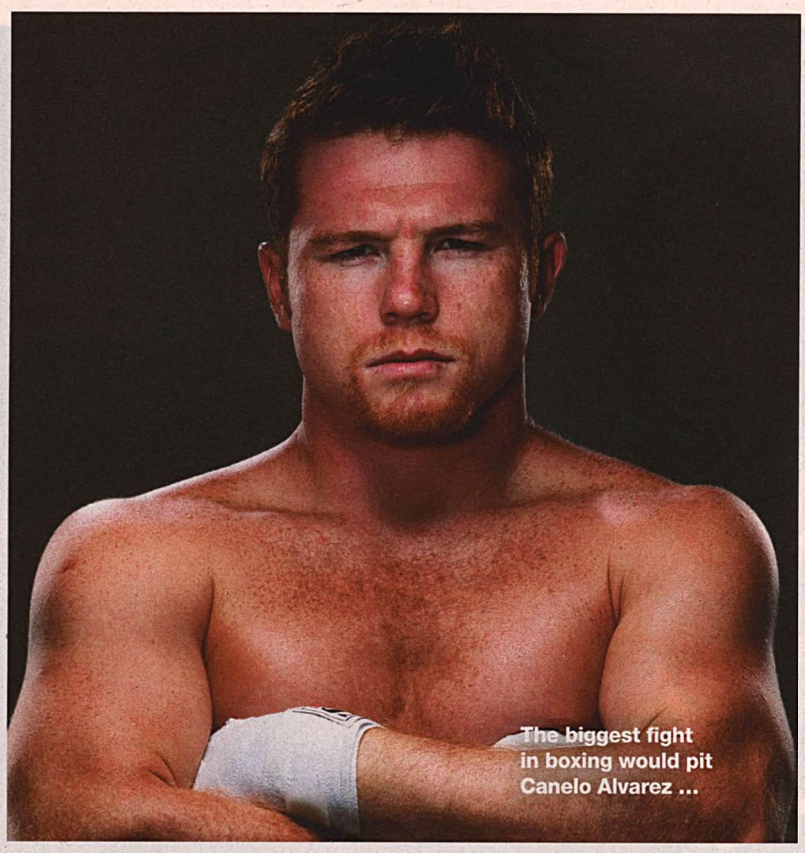
There's so much on my plate, which I assume is a unique situation, because I do know some fighters out there do immediately look ahead at being inducted into the Hall of Fame. I'm not waiting to get in.

I'll be damned near 60 when I go into the Hall of Fame and I don't want to think about seeing 60. Do I want to see 60 in life? Yes! I want to enjoy the process of that time between the end of my career and the time that I'm actually inducted into the Hall of Fame. Hey, I'm 52 now, so hell no, I'm not thinking about the Hall of Fame right now.

I will say this: I'm very happy that Evander Holyfield is being inducted this year. He was a true warrior. He deserves being in the Hall of Fame. He was a great fighter, but there are great fighters in the Hall of Fame that have inspired me. Muhammad Ali, for one. Mike Tyson is another. Ali did so many things outside of boxing that he was a Hall of Famer in life. That's what I'm trying to be. I think it's something we should try to aspire to, doing productive and positive things outside the sport of boxing.

I respect the career of Holyfield and what he did. We do have some things in common, too. No one thought he would beat some of the guys he did – like Tyson, and for me, not many thought I would beat someone like Felix Trinidad. But my career started a little differently than his. I did five years in a penitentiary and his started by winning an Olympic medal. RING

Bernard Hopkins has plenty of things to do outside the ring.



The biggest fight in boxing would pit Canelo Alvarez ...

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. GENNADY GOLOVKIN

... against undefeated Gennady Golovkin.

THREE EXPERTS – A FIGHTER, A TRAINER AND A MEDIA MEMBER – TELL YOU HOW A MYTHICAL MATCHUP WOULD PLAY OUT

"He's not a machine. He's a man."

That's a line in "Rocky IV," in which Hollywood's favorite fighter shakes the seemingly invincible Ivan Drago and exposes his mortality. This is the real world, however, not Hollywood.

On March 18, Gennady Golovkin defeated Daniel Jacobs by a unanimous, but tight decision at Madison Square Garden in New York. The unified middleweight champion finally faced a stiff test – there were fans who thought he lost – and this new vulnerability has some experts reevaluating the battle that everyone wants to see.

Canelo Alvarez, the RING middleweight champion, vs. Gennady Golovkin is still the hottest prospective fight in boxing. It would feature two big punchers, each bringing his own brand of excitement and loyal following but both dogged by skepticism about the challenges they've faced. This fight would dismiss all the questions about hype and avoidance. For those reasons, the matchup is eagerly anticipated the world over and, should it be made, cannot fail to dazzle.

Golovkin's struggle against Jacobs proved that one man had the attributes to cause him difficulty. The fact remains, though, that a Golovkin fight could be just as dangerous for Alvarez as it ever was. "Styles make fights" isn't just a throwaway axiom in this case, and the sport's history is full of other examples.

THE RING spoke to three boxing experts to gauge their opinions on what will happen if the ultimate middleweight showdown finally comes to fruition.

TWITTER POLL: WHO WINS? GOLOVKIN 62% ★ CANELO 38% ★ DRAW 0%

CANELO ★ TALE OF THE TAPE ★ GOLOVKIN

160 POUNDS

CANELO		GOLOVKIN
26	AGE	35
48-1-1 (34 KOS)	RECORD	37-0 (33 KOS)
68.0	KO PERCENTAGE	89.2
ORTHODOX	STANCE	ORTHODOX
5 FEET 9 INCHES (175 CM)	HEIGHT	5 FEET 10 INCHES (179 CM)
70 INCHES (179 CM)	REACH	70 INCHES (178 CM)

FIGHTER

AMIR KHAN
Former junior welterweight titleholder

The Jacobs fight did show people that Triple-G is beatable. It shows that he can be caught and that there is a way to box him. I've been in the ring with Canelo and he hits very hard with both hands. He has a real chance to beat Triple-G, not only because of his skills, but because he comes into the ring very heavy. Every shot he hits you with is designed to break you down. For me, this is almost a 50-50 fight, but I lean slightly towards Canelo. His movement has improved and he feints very well. The right hand he caught me with was set up off a feint. And people can say what they want, but whoever Canelo catches with that shot is getting knocked out. Canelo can beat Golovkin by using his own style and by sticking to what he knows best. It's also very difficult to hurt him. If you look at Canelo's fights, he takes a great punch and he's always ready to fire back. It's a battle of punchers but, for me, Canelo is slicker and he's the one doing all the improving. Triple-G fights in straight lines and gets caught. I think it goes 12 rounds and Canelo wins comfortably on the scorecards.

PREDICTION: Canelo

TRAINER

FREDDIE ROACH
Hall of Fame trainer

Canelo is getting better all the time and Golovkin is a bit older now, but I don't know if that will make a difference. In the Jacobs fight, Golovkin had a clever boxer in front of him who had a completely different style from Canelo. And I thought Golovkin won the fight anyway. It was back and forth, but I thought the (fourth-round) knockdown earned him the decision. Canelo is an accurate puncher and, as I said, he has improved technically. He's thinking now, he sets things up and he's not just standing there swinging. It's a much more competitive fight than people think. At one time, everyone was picking Golovkin, but I don't think that's the case now. It's getting closer all the time. Canelo must get past (Julio Cesar) Chavez Jr. but, hypothetically, if I had to pick a winner, I'd go with Triple-G. He's getting older but I don't think he's done yet. Jacobs is a good boxer and he gave him some trouble, and if Canelo can change his style, he could trouble him too. It's just that Golovkin and Canelo are natural punchers and I feel that both guys would be firing away. With two punchers, I think the stronger man wins, and that's Golovkin.

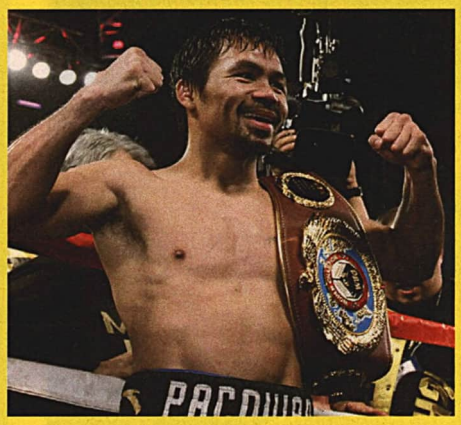
PREDICTION: Golovkin

MEDIA

PAULIE MALIGNAGGI
Showtime analyst

Jacobs and Canelo are two completely different fighters. I'm not sure that Canelo can make up for the deficiencies he has in terms of closing the range. He doesn't have an effective jab and he doesn't have quick feet. Canelo, as we saw against Erislandy Lara and Floyd Mayweather, has trouble with guys who control range. What I will say is that Jacobs' body-punching made Golovkin back off. Canelo can be a destructive body-puncher but, again, Jacobs could disguise his entrance by using his feet. If Canelo can cut the distance in a creative way to get inside, then he'll have success, but I'm not sure how he's going to do that. And you can't make any mistakes against Golovkin or your night could be over. Jacobs was also able to buy time against Golovkin by switching stance, and he never stood still. He was changing things up for 12 rounds. I'm not knocking Canelo because he is a good, solid fighter, but I don't think he has enough versatility to trouble Golovkin. I don't see the fight going over six rounds because Canelo is going to be right in front of him, and that means he'll be right in the middle of the dynamite.

PREDICTION: Golovkin



Manny Pacquiao's act isn't as amusing as it once was.

THE PAC-MAN SHUFFLE

Remember when it was fun to watch **Manny Pacquiao**? Not his fights – those still at least have the potential – but the hype. The goofy duets with **Jimmy Kimmel**, press conferences at the Beverly Hills Hotel, helicopter shots of Manny training on the roof at the Wild Card Boxing Club (because … why NOT?), and all of it peppered with Manny's make-the-people-happy mantra. He *did* make us happy.

Not so much anymore. In the new paradigm of **Mayweather-Pacquiao** and now **Mayweather-McGregor** (no, not going there this month), the quest to secure Pacquiao's next payday has been a tedious series of ons, offs and why-do-we-cares.

First it was supposed to happen in April against Australian **Jeff Horn** – a relative unknown who has never fought outside his home country – in Australia. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, word dropped in February that Pacquiao's adviser, **Michael Koncz**, was negotiating to face **Amir Khan** in May … in the United Arab Emirates. Pacquiao's promoter, **Bob Arum**, initially said it was news to him, but, presumably after hearing of mysterious investors offering $38 million to finance the fight, he changed his public position to, "That's what we're concentrating on – the fight with Amir Khan at the UAE."

And so for a couple weeks the talk was all about Pacquiao-Khan until Arum announced the deal wouldn't go through because the investors couldn't come up with the cash.

Khan, who apparently was instrumental in the Middle East connection, continued to say the money was there, make it happen. Arum said maybe someday, hopefully in November, but where? Dubai? U.K.? He dismissed the U.S. as uninterested in Pacquiao's next fight (at the same time, conservative organizations like Americans for Tax Reform seized on Arum's stance as proof of the United States' unreasonable income-tax laws).

At the end of the day – or at press time, at least – Khan was out and another name was brought up: Horn. In Australia. In July. Who will broadcast it is anyone's guess. Are we having fun yet?

Nicola Adams, who won a flyweight gold medal at the 2012 Olympics, will make her much-anticipated pro debut on April 8. **Marlen Esparza**, who stood next to Adams on the podium in London wearing a bronze medal, successfully made her pro debut in March. But the two will never fight, or even spar, Adams told The Mirror in March, because they are now in a relationship. "It's the perfect partnership," she said, adding that there would be a healthy competition to see who can win more world titles.

Patty Jenkins, who directed the upcoming "Wonder Woman" movie, confirmed in mid-March on Twitter that the role of Artemis will be played by former two-division titleholder and notorious **James Kirkland**-tormentor (in a positive way) **Ann Wolfe**. For those of you who aren't comic nerds like our own **Doug Fischer**, Artemis is basically a badass Amazon warrior, so we're probably looking at a lock on every Best Casting award.

Former undisputed middleweight champion **Rodrigo Valdez**, best known for a pair of fights against **Carlos Monzon,** in 1976 and '77, died on March 14 in Colombia at the age of 70. Valdez lost both encounters against Monzon but both fights went the 15-round distance and the second was the last, and arguably one of the toughest, of the Argentine Hall of Famer's career. Valdez retired in 1980 with a record of 63-8-2 (43 knockouts).

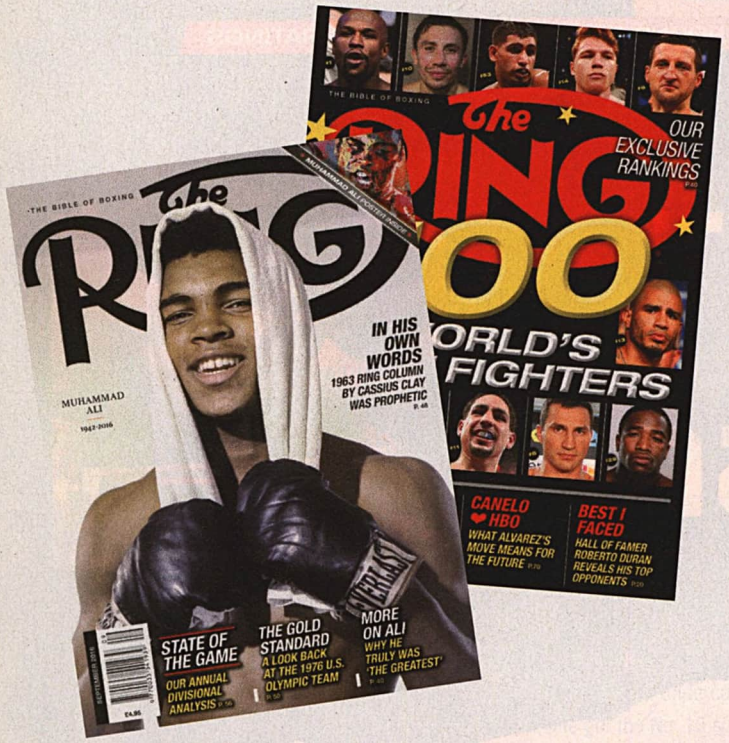
Former Golden Boy Promotions CEO-turned-Ringstar Sports creator **Richard Schaefer** unveiled an ambitious, if still vague plan to organize the "World Boxing Series," a tournament reminiscent of Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic." The WBS would feature two weight classes (not specified) with $50 million in prize money and a trophy named after Muhammad Ali. All promoters welcome, said Schaefer.

Ali's son, **Muhammad Ali Jr.**, was detained in late February at an airport in Florida after returning from Jamaica, where his mother, **Khalilah Camacho-Ali**, had given a speech on black history. A family spokesman said Camacho-Ali avoided detention by showing a photo of herself with her late husband, but Ali Jr. was held for two hours and questioned about being Muslim. Customs and Border Protection released a non-specific statement saying its officers are "guided by the highest ethical and moral principles."

According to the Albuquerque Journal, DNA tests discredited a man long claiming to be the father of the late **Johnny Tapia**, who will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame this year. The tests were ordered after Tapia's widow sued **Jerry Padilla** for using the boxer's name for profit.

A week after burglars allegedly broke into **Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s** Las Vegas home and took items worth $150,000 as he was out celebrating his 40th birthday, "Money" was hit again, this time in Birmingham, England. While Mayweather was at a fan event, somebody broke into his TMT-branded van, doused it with accelerant and burned it to a crisp. Police are still investigating and the biggest question remains: Mayweather had *a van*? RING

SHOP



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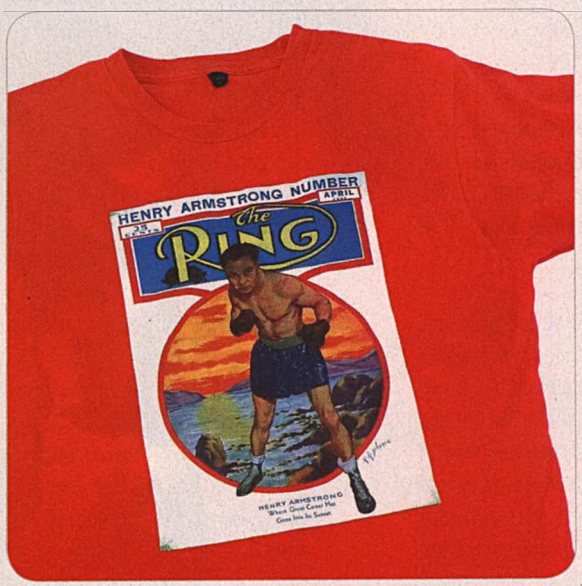
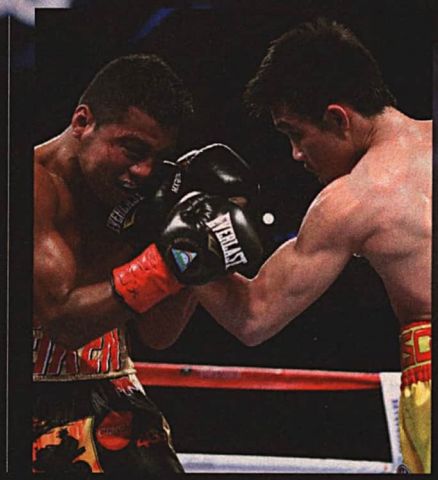


BACK ISSUES | APPAREL | SUBSCRIBE

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI

By **Michael Rosenthal**



Srisaket Sor Rungvisai was overwhelmed after learning he had beaten the top fighter in the world.

I thought Roman Gonzalez did more than enough to earn the victory against Srisaket Sor Rungvisai on the Gennady Golovkin-Daniel Jacobs card March 18 in New York. The majority of observers agree with me.

The reality is this, though: The veteran Thai fighter upset the No. 1 fighter in the world pound-for-pound, which is a significant accomplishment.

Sor Rungvisai's previous seven fights were six-rounders against nobodies in Thailand. The former 115-pound titleholder hadn't engaged in a real fight since he stopped Jose Salgado in May 2015.

So we really didn't know what to expect from him against Gonzalez. What we got was an absolute beast.

Sor Rungvisai, who was stopped in his first two fights but never again, took an astounding number of hard punches from Gonzalez, hardly blinked and never stopped attacking his gifted, more noted opponent.

Indeed, from a purely physical standpoint, Sor Rungvisai was impressive. I thought during the fight, "Who the hell is going to want to fight this guy after witnessing this?"

Gonzalez battled through a first-round knockdown and two bloody cuts to land more punches than Sor Rungvisai did, including a division record 372 power shots, according to CompuBox, but the judges evidently rewarded Sor Rungvisai for his relentless aggression.

Two judges scored the fight 114-112 (seven rounds to five) while the third had it 113-113, giving Sor Rungvisai the WBC junior bantamweight title and altering pound-for-pound lists around the world.

Everyone knows who Srisaket Sor Rungvisai is now. RING

POUND FOR POUND: After reattaching our jaws following Srisaket Sor Rungvisai's upset (and for some, upsetting) win over Roman Gonzalez (No. 1 last month), the list was adjusted accordingly. Gonzalez dropped to No. 4 below Gennady Golovkin (No. 4 last month), who narrowly passed his test with a decision over Daniel Jacobs (unrated) and rose to No. 3. Subsequently, the shift elevated Sergey Kovalev one spot to No. 2 and – cue "Hail to the Chief" – Andre Ward to No. 1.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Dominic Breazeale (unrated last month) provided some welcome entertainment en route to a fifth-round knockout of Izuagbe Ugonoh (also unrated) on the Deontay Wilder-Gerald Washington undercard. Breazeale got the No. 10 spot as a result, replacing Jarrell Miller. Breazeale moved up to No. 9 and Miller returned, however, after David Haye (No. 7 last month) lost to Tony Bellew (No. 3-rated cruiserweight) and dropped out.

Dominic Breazeale (right) vs. Izuagbe Ugonoh.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Marcus Browne (unrated last month) bumped Vyacheslav Shabranskyy from the No. 10 spot after knocking out Thomas Williams Jr. (unrated).

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Curtis Stevens (unrated) is the only person who won't remember the third-round knockout punch delivered by David Lemieux, who was lifted from No. 4 to No. 3 by the nightmare-inducing win.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: There was a shakeup after Jermall Charlo (No. 2 last month) went up in weight and Jarrett Hurd (No. 9 last month) grabbed a very solid win and the IBF title with a ninth-round stoppage of Tony Harrison (unrated). Everybody previously below Charlo moved up a notch except for Liam Smith, who stayed at No. 8 after Hurd jumped over him to No. 7. The resulting vacancy at No. 10 was filled by Germany's Jack Culcay. Culcay was then replaced by 2016 RING Prospect of the Year Erickson Lubin, who TKO'd Jorge Cota (unrated) in four rounds.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Lamont Peterson found his way back to the ratings at No. 10, replacing Russia's Konstantin Ponomarev after defeating David Avenesyan (unrated) by a unanimous decision. At the other end of the list, Keith Thurman won a title-unifying split decision against Danny Garcia and went from No. 2 to No. 1. Garcia (No. 7 last month) slipped to No. 8.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Rey Vargas climbed from No. 4 to No. 3 after winning a vacant belt with a majority decision over unrated Gavin McDonnell.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Tomoki Kameda (No. 8 last month) took another fight well above 118 pounds and was dropped from the list. With his departure, the empty spot at No. 10 was inherited by Venezuelan Liborio Solis.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: With Gonzalez's somewhat controversial loss to Sor Rungvisai, he dropped from No. 2 to No. 3 and the Thai underdog jumped from No. 4 to No. 2. Carlos Cuadras (No. 3 last month), who struggled but eventually beat David Carmona (unrated) on the same card, slipped to No. 4.

FLYWEIGHTS: Former strawweight title challenger Juan Hernandez (unrated last month) knocked No. 7-rated Nawaphon Por Chokchai out and off the list, picking up the No. 10 spot and a shiny green belt for his trouble.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

It's generally not good when Deontay Wilder (left) has you in his sights, as Gerald Washington found out on February 25.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C TYSON FURY
266 • U.K. • 25-0-0 (18 KOs)

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
618 • Ukraine • 64-4-0 (53 KOs)
2. **DEONTAY WILDER**
174 • U.S. • 38-0-0 (37 KOs)
3. **KUBRAT PULEV**
284 • Bulgaria • 24-1-0 (13 KOs)
4. **LUIS ORTIZ**
66 • Cuba • 27-0-0 (23 KOs)
5. **ANTHONY JOSHUA**
73 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)
6. **JOSEPH PARKER**
50 • New Zealand • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)
7. **ANDY RUIZ JR.**
42 • Mexico • 29-1-0 (19 KOs)
8. **DILLIAN WHYTE**
14 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (15 KOs)
9. **DOMINIC BREAZEALE**
4 • U.S. • 18-1-0 (16 KOs)
10. **JARRELL MILLER**
3 • U.S. • 18-0-1 (16 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **OLEKSANDR USYK**
77 • Ukraine • 11-0-0 (10 KOs)
2. **MURAT GASSIEV**
19 • Russia • 24-0-0 (17 KOs)
3. **TONY BELLEW**
44 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (19 KOs)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
373 • Russia • 29-3-0 (22 KOs)
5. **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI**
84 • Poland • 26-1-0 (16 KOs)
6. **MARCO HUCK**
263 • Germany • 40-3-1 (27 KOs)
7. **MAIRIS BRIEDIS**
56 • Latvia • 21-0-0 (18 KOs)
8. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
229 • Germany • 39-8-2 (24 KOs)
9. **ILUNGA MAKABU**
193 • Congo • 19-2-0 (18 KOs)
10. **YUNIER DORTICOS**
44 • Cuba • 21-0-0 (20 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **ANDRE WARD**
52 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (15 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
218 • Russia • 30-1-1 (26 KOs)
3. **ADONIS STEVENSON**
198 • Canada • 28-1-0 (23 KOs)
4. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ**
158 • Colombia • 22-0-0 (11 KOs)
5. **ARTUR BETERBIEV**
119 • Russia • 11-0-0 (11 KOs)
6. **JOE SMITH JR.**
40 • U.S. • 23-1-0 (19 KOs)
7. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
25 • U.K. • 30-3-0 (16 KOs)
8. **OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK**
18 • Ukraine • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)
9. **SULLIVAN BARRERA**
14 • Cuba • 18-1-0 (13 KOs)
10. **MARCUS BROWNE**
5 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (14 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **JAMES DEGALE**
198 • U.K. • 23-1-1 (14 KOs)
2. **BADOU JACK**
100 • Sweden • 20-1-3 (12 KOs)
3. **GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
141 • Mexico • 34-0-0 (24 KOs)
4. **GEORGE GROVES**
276 • U.K. • 25-3-0 (18 KOs)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
134 • U.S. • 25-2-0 (16 KOs)
6. **CALLUM SMITH**
94 • U.K. • 22-0-0 (17 KOs)
7. **ANTHONY DIRRELL**
136 • U.S. • 30-1-1 (24 KOs)
8. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
389 • Armenia • 45-5-0 (30 KOs)
9. **FEDOR CHUDINOV**
98 • Russia • 14-1-0 (10 KOs)
10. **TYRON ZEUGE**
19 • Germany • 19-0-1 (11 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

- **C CANELO ALVAREZ**
  70 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)
- **1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
  276 • Kaz. • 37-0-0 (33 KOs)
- **2. DANIEL JACOBS**
  119 • U.S. • 32-2-0 (29 KOs)
- **3. DAVID LEMIEUX**
  95 • Canada • 37-3-0 (33 KOs)
- **4. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
  121 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **5. ANDY LEE**
  119 • Ireland • 35-3-1 (24 KOs)
- **6. CHRIS EUBANK JR.**
  102 • U.K. • 24-1-0 (19 KOs)
- **7. HASSAN N'DAM**
  166 • Cameroon • 35-2-0 (21 KOs)
- **8. AVTANDIL KHURTSIDZE**
  55 • Georgia • 32-2-2 (21 KOs)
- **9. MACIEJ SULECKI**
  38 • Poland • 23-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **10. RYOTA MURATA**
  12 • Japan • 12-0-0 (9 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. CANELO ALVAREZ**
  27 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)
- **2. ERISLANDY LARA**
  299 • Cuba • 24-2-2 (14 KOs)
- **3. MIGUEL COTTO**
  70 • P.R. • 40-5-0 (33 KOs)
- **4. JERMELL CHARLO**
  176 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **5. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
  75 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **6. AUSTIN TROUT**
  251 • U.S. • 30-3-0 (17 KOs)
- **7. JARRETT HURD**
  19 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **8. LIAM SMITH**
  80 • U.K. • 24-1-1 (13 KOs)
- **9. MICHEL SORO**
  14 • France • 29-1-1 (19 KOs)
- **10. ERICKSON LUBIN**
  3 • U.S. • 18-0-0 (13 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. KEITH THURMAN**
  211 • U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **2. KELL BROOK**
  309 • U.K. • 36-1-0 (25 KOs)
- **3. SHAWN PORTER**
  172 • U.S. • 26-2-1 (16 KOs)
- **4. MANNY PACQUIAO**
  20 • Phil. • 59-6-2 (38 KOs)
- **5. TIM BRADLEY**
  250 • U.S. • 33-2-1 (13 KOs)
- **6. AMIR KHAN**
  151 • U.K. • 31-4-0 (19 KOs)
- **7. ERROL SPENCE**
  77 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **8. DANNY GARCIA**
  86 • U.S. • 33-1-0 (19 KOs)
- **9. JESSIE VARGAS**
  55 • U.S. • 27-2-0 (10 KOs)
- **10. LAMONT PETERSON**
  5 • U.S. • 35-3-1 (17 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

- **C TERENCE CRAWFORD**
  101 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (21 KOs)
- **1. VIKTOR POSTOL**
  188 • Ukraine • 28-1-0 (12 KOs)
- **2. ANTONIO OROZCO**
  77 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **3. ADRIAN GRANADOS**
  55 • U.S. • 18-5-2 (12 KOs)
- **4. RICKY BURNS**
  43 • U.K. • 41-5-1 (14 KOs)
- **5. REGIS PROGRAIS**
  35 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **6. JULIUS INDONGO**
  16 • Namibia • 21-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **7. JACK CATTERALL**
  52 • U.K. • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **8. EDUARD TROYANOVSKY**
  69 • Russia • 25-1-0 (22 KOs)
- **9. SERGEY LIPINETS**
  15 • Russia • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **10. ANTHONY YIGIT**
  6 • Sweden • 19-0-1 (7 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

- **C JORGE LINARES**
  159 • Venezuela • 41-3-0 (27 KOs)
- **1. MIKEY GARCIA**
  8 • U.S. • 36-0-0 (30 KOs)
- **2. TERRY FLANAGAN**
  76 • U.K. • 32-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **3. ROBERT EASTER**
  51 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **4. ANTHONY CROLLA**
  74 • U.K. • 31-5-3 (13 KOs)
- **5. DENIS SHAFIKOV**
  102 • Russia • 38-2-1 (20 KOs)
- **6. SHARIF BOGERE**
  125 • Uganda • 29-1-0 (20 KOs)
- **7. RICHARD COMMEY**
  95 • Ghana • 25-2-0 (22 KOs)
- **8. FELIX VERDEJO**
  49 • Puerto Rico • 23-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **9. DEJAN ZLATICANIN**
  102 • Montenegro • 22-1-0 (15 KOs)
- **10. PETR PETROV**
  26 • Russia • 38-4-2 (19 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. VASYL LOMACHENKO**
  41 • Ukraine • 7-1-0 (5 KOs)
- **2. ORLANDO SALIDO**
  131 • Mexico • 43-13-4 (30 KOs)
- **3. JEZREEL CORRALES**
  47 • Panama • 21-1-0 (8 KOs)
- **4. MIGUEL BERCHELT**
  8 • Mexico • 31-1-0 (28 KOs)
- **5. TAKASHI MIURA**
  207 • Japan • 31-3-2 (24 KOs)
- **6. GERVONTA DAVIS**
  10 • U.S. • 17-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **7. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
  377 • Japan • 24-2-1 (20 KOs)
- **8. FRANCISCO VARGAS**
  141 • Mexico • 23-1-2 (17 KOs)
- **9. ROMAN MARTINEZ**
  446 • P.R. • 29-3-3 (17 KOs)
- **10. JASON SOSA**
  39 • U.S. • 20-1-4 (15 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. LEO SANTA CRUZ**
  82 • U.S. • 33-1-1 (18 KOs)
- **2. GARY RUSSELL JR.**
  104 • U.S. • 27-1-0 (16 KOs)
- **3. CARL FRAMPTON**
  34 • U.K. • 23-1-0 (14 KOs)
- **4. LEE SELBY**
  158 • U.K. • 24-1-0 (9 KOs)
- **5. ABNER MARES**
  203 • Mexico • 30-2-1 (15 KOs)
- **6. SIMPIWE VETYEKA**
  172 • S. Africa • 29-3-0 (17 KOs)
- **7. OSCAR VALDEZ**
  50 • Mexico • 21-0-0 (19 KOs)
- **8. JOSEPH DIAZ JR.**
  52 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **9. JESUS CUELLAR**
  128 • Argentina • 28-2-0 (21 KOs)
- **10. JORGE LARA**
  24 • Mexico • 28-0-2 (20 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

- **C (VACANT)**
- **1. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
  333 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **2. JESSIE MAGDALENO**
  93 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (17 KOs)
- **3. REY VARGAS**
  119 • Mexico • 29-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **4. GENESIS SERVANIA**
  158 • Phil. • 28-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **5. NONITO DONAIRE**
  104 • Phil. • 37-4-0 (24 KOs)
- **6. MOISES FLORES**
  37 • Mexico • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)
- **7. DIEGO DE LA HOYA**
  34 • Mexico • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **8. HUGO RUIZ**
  15 • Mexico • 36-4-0 (32 KOs)
- **9. YUKINORI OGUNI**
  12 • Japan • 19-1-1 (7 KOs)
- **10. JONATHAN GUZMAN**
  35 • Dom. Rep. • 22-1-0 (22 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the RING title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his champion weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
281 • Japan • 27-0-2 (19 KOs)

1. JAMIE MCDONNELL
203 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (13 KOs)

2. JUAN CARLOS PAYANO
130 • Dom. Rep. • 18-1-0 (9 KOs)

3. LEE HASKINS
93 • U.K. • 34-3-0 (14 KOs)

4. ANSELMO MORENO
469 • Panama • 36-5-1 (12 KOs)

5. MARLON TAPALES
66 • Phil. • 29-2-0 (12 KOs)

6. ZHANAT ZHAKIYANOV
6 • Kaz. • 27-1-0 (18 KOs)

7. RAU'SHEE WARREN
39 • U.S. • 14-2-0 (4 KOs)

8. ZOLANI TETE
54 • S. Africa • 24-3-0 (20 KOs)

9. LUIS NERY
34 • Mexico • 23-0-0 (17 KOs)

10. LIBORIO SOLIS
2 • Venezuela • 25-5-1 (11 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. NAOYA INOUE
116 • Japan • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

2. SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI
203 • Thailand • 42-4-1 (38 KOs)

3. ROMAN GONZALEZ
28 • Nicaragua • 46-1-0 (38 KOs)

4. CARLOS CUADRAS
252 • Mexico • 36-1-1 (27 KOs)

5. JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA
24 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (25 KOs)

6. KHALID YAFAI
54 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

7. LUIS CONCEPCION
79 • Panama • 35-5-0 (24 KOs)

8. JERWIN ANCAJAS
29 • Phil. • 26-1-1 (17 KOs)

9. MCJOE ARROYO
145 • P.R. • 17-1-0 (8 KOs)

10. KOHEI KONO
75 • Japan • 32-10-1 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. KAZUTO IOKA
132 • Japan • 21-1-0 (13 KOs)

2. JOHNRIEL CASIMERO
76 • Phil. • 23-3-0 (15 KOs)

3. DONNIE NIETES
26 • Phil. • 39-1-4 (22 KOs)

4. AMNAT RUENROENG
150 • Thailand • 17-1-0 (5 KOs)

5. JUAN CARLOS REVECO
286 • Argentina • 37-3-0 (19 KOs)

6. MCWILLIAMS ARROYO
133 • P.R. • 16-3-0 (14 KOs)

7. ZOU SHIMING
20 • China • 9-1-0 (2 KOs)

8. DAIGO HIGA
25 • Japan • 12-0-0 (12 KOs)

9. VINCENT LEGRAND
6 • France • 24-0-0 (14 KOs)

10. JUAN HERNANDEZ
3 • Mexico • 34-2-0 (25 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. PEDRO GUEVARA
208 • Mexico • 29-2-1 (17 KOs)

2. AKIRA YAEGASHI
64 • Japan • 25-5-0 (13 KOs)

3. GANIGAN LOPEZ
55 • Mexico • 28-6-0 (17 KOs)

4. KOSEI TANAKA
12 • Japan • 8-0-0 (5 KOs)

5. RYOICHI TAGUCHI
119 • Japan • 25-2-2 (11 KOs)

6. CARLOS CANIZALES
12 • Venezuela • 16-0-1 (13 KOs)

7. RANDY PETALCORIN
150 • Phil. • 26-2-1 (19 KOs)

8. MILAN MELINDO
123 • Phil. • 35-2-0 (12 KOs)

9. HEKKIE BUDLER
22 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (10 KOs)

10. KEN SHIRO
17 • Japan • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. WANHENG MENAYOTHIN
301 • Thailand • 45-0-0 (17 KOs)

2. KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART
129 • Thailand • 15-0-0 (7 KOs)

3. BYRON ROJAS
53 • Nicaragua • 18-3-3 (8 KOs)

4. JOSE ARGUMEDO
64 • Mexico • 19-3-1 (11 KOs)

5. KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA
208 • Japan • 31-8-0 (12 KOs)

6. CARLOS BUITRAGO
232 • Nicaragua • 30-2-1 (17 KOs)

7. RIKU KANO
43 • Japan • 11-2-1 (6 KOs)

8. SIMPHIWE KHONCO
22 • S. Africa • 17-5-0 (7 KOs)

9. SAUL JUAREZ
37 • Mexico • 23-5-1 (12 KOs)

10. RYUYA YAMANAKA
19 • Japan • 14-2-0 (4 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. ANDRE WARD
80 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (15 KOs)

2. SERGEY KOVALEV
106 • Russia • 30-1-1 (26 KOs)

3. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
110 • Kazakhstan • 37-0-0 (33 KOs)

4. ROMAN GONZALEZ
146 • Nicaragua • 46-1-0 (38 KOs)

5. TERENCE CRAWFORD
99 • U.S. • 30-0-0 (21 KOs)

6. VASYL LOMACHENKO
41 • Ukraine • 7-1-0 (5 KO)

7. GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
187 • Cuba • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. CANELO ALVAREZ
70 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (34 KOs)

9. SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
97 • Japan • 27-0-2 (19 KOs)

10. NAOYA INOUE
8 • Japan • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested, then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

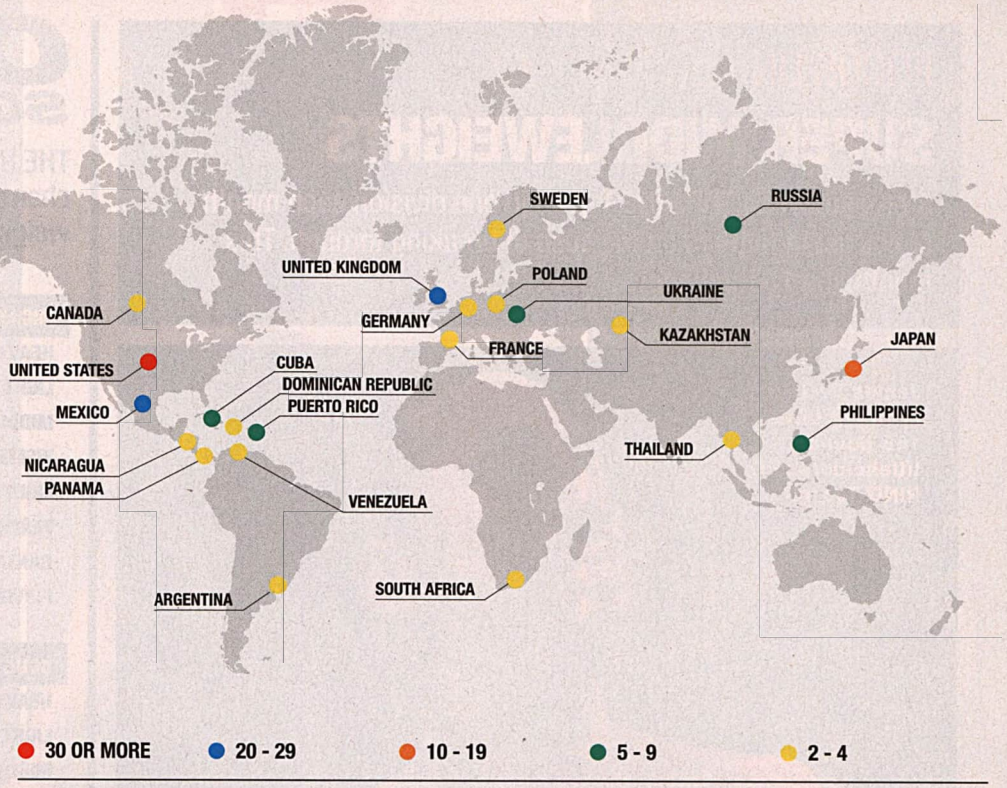
A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	34	↑ 3
●	MEXICO	22	↑ 1
●	UNITED KINGDOM	22	↓ 1
●	JAPAN	16	↓ 1
●	PHILIPPINES	9	
●	RUSSIA	9	↓ 1
●	CUBA	5	
●	PUERTO RICO	5	
●	UKRAINE	5	↓ 1
●	SOUTH AFRICA	4	
●	THAILAND	4	↓ 1
●	GERMANY	3	
●	NICARAGUA	3	
●	PANAMA	3	
●	VENEZUELA	3	↑ 1
●	ARGENTINA	2	
●	CANADA	2	
●	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
●	FRANCE	2	
●	KAZAKHSTAN	2	
●	POLAND	2	
●	SWEDEN	2	
	ARMENIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	CAMEROON	1	
	CHINA	1	
	COLOMBIA	1	
	CONGO	1	
	GEORGIA	1	
	GHANA	1	
	IRELAND	1	
	LATVIA	1	
	MONTENEGRO	1	
	NAMIBIA	1	
	NEW ZEALAND	1	
	UGANDA	1	

Countries out (from last month): None
• *Countries in:* None



RUSSIA VS. PHILIPPINES

The four nations that continue to dominate the RING Ratings are the U.S., Mexico, U.K. and Japan. Lurking behind them with nine rated boxers each are Russia and the Philippines, even though they thrive at opposite ends of the weight spectrum: In not one division do they both have a rated fighter. Have a look.

DIVISION	RUSSIA	PHILIPPINES
HEAVYWEIGHTS	0	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	2	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	2	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	0
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	2	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	0
FEATHERWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	0	2
BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	1
FLYWEIGHTS	0	2
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	2
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	0
TOTAL	9	9

LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

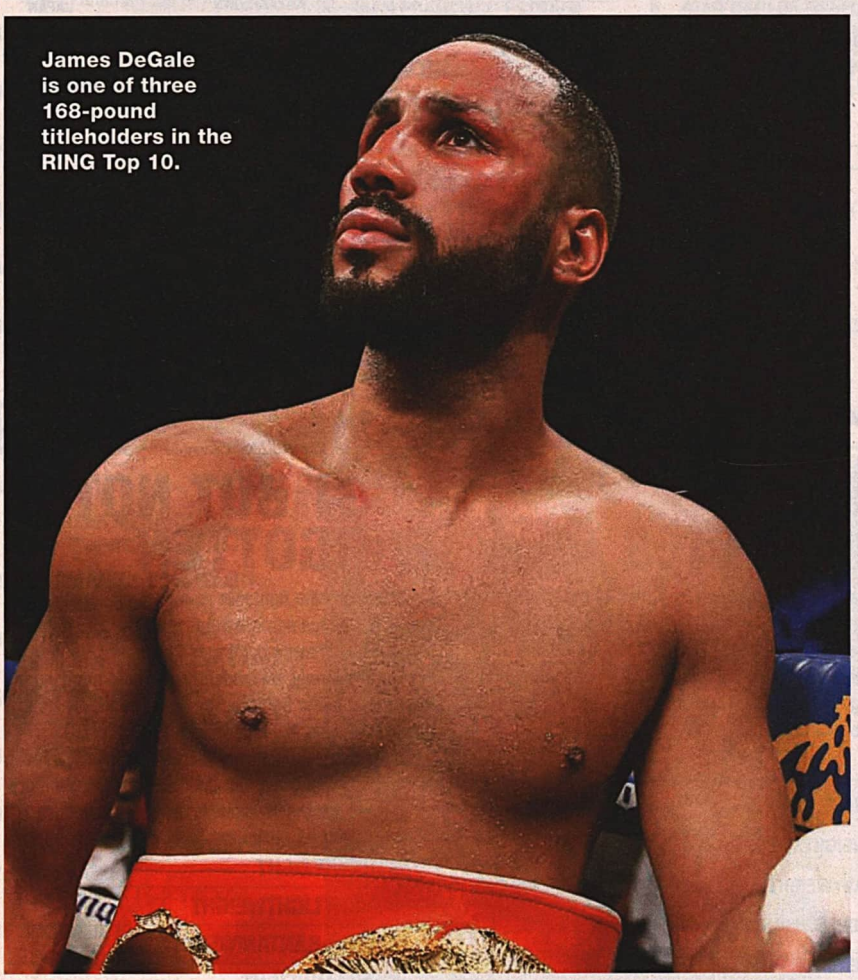
It's OK for an elite fighter to lose. A quick survey of the RING Ratings demonstrates that. The 175 fighters in our ratings have a combined 288 losses, yet they're here. Interestingly, we evidently are more forgiving of losses by smaller fighters: The lighter eight divisions have 162 losses, the heavier nine only 126. Or, perhaps more likely, the smaller divisions are deeper and more competitive, and the little boxers fight more often. Here are the divisions in order of losses.

30	STRAWWEIGHT
26	JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
25	JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
24	BANTAMWEIGHT
21	WELTERWEIGHT
21	JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
19	CRUISERWEIGHT
18	LIGHTWEIGHT
15	FLYWEIGHT
14	SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
14	MIDDLEWEIGHT
13	JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
12	JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
11	FEATHERWEIGHT
10	JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
8	HEAVYWEIGHT
7	LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT

FOCUS ON . . .

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 168-pounders.



James DeGale is one of three 168-pound titleholders in the RING Top 10.

MOST WEEKS RATED: GEORGE GROVES **276**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: TYRON ZEUGE **19**

OLDEST: ARTHUR ABRAHAM **37**

YOUNGEST: ZEUGE **24**

MOST FIGHTS: ABRAHAM **50**

FEWEST FIGHTS: FEDOR CHUDINOV **15**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: GILBERTO RAMIREZ, CALLUM SMITH **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: GROVES **89.3 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: ABRAHAM **30**

FEWEST KOS: CHUDINOV **10**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: RAMIREZ **34 FIGHTS**

ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: JAMES DEGALE (IBF), RAMIREZ (WBO), ZEUGE (WBA)

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): DAVID BENAVIDEZ, DAVID BROPHY, JESSE HART, JOSE UZCATEGUI, AVNI YILDIRIM

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KEITH THURMAN
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: TYSON FURY
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: DONNIE NIETES

MITCH ABRAMSON STAFF WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: DEONTAY WILDER
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: KELL BROOK
LIGHTWEIGHT: VASYL LOMACHENKO
FEATHERWEIGHT: LEO SANTA CRUZ
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: KAZUTO IOKA

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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Pictured left to right: Damon Allen Jr., Jessie Vargas, Fernando Vargas

THE FIGHT FOR MEXICO

CANELO ALVAREZ AND **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.** WILL BRING A GREAT DEAL OF HISTORY – BOTH PERSONAL AND CULTURAL – INTO THE RING

By **Norm Frauenheim**

They share a language, culture and country. It was inevitable, perhaps, that Canelo Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. also would share a ring one day.

How they got there, however, is a complicated path, unpredictable at almost every turn. Along the way, there is Mexican history, national pride, personal legacy, family and finances. For nearly a decade, the fight was imagined, then forgotten and

There could be no bigger boxing match south of the border than Canelo Alvarez vs. Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

finally resurrected for May 6.

Yet despite all that has been said and seen, the fight itself remains as hard to judge as just about everything that has preceded it. Maybe that's appropriate. Maybe not. Maybe it's not much of a contest at all. Maybe it's more of an event than a real fight. Maybe, maybe, maybe.

All of those maybes are maybe reasons to watch a couple of fighters who are well-known on both sides of the border, so well-known, in fact, that we call them by their first names as if they were kids in the neighborhood. It's Canelo. It's Julio Jr.

The kids have grown up and now they're finally going to fight. It will be played out on an international stage at Las Vegas' T-Mobile Arena in a pay-per-view bout. Yet the fight has divided a country as if it were a small community split by rival Little League teams. Late Massachusetts congressman Tip O'Neill, a former Speaker of The House, famously said, "All politics is local." He could have been talking about boxing. It's at its very best when it's local. That's when the stakes are personal, almost tribal.

Never has a fight been more personal than the one about to unfold between Canelo and Julio Jr.

"The rivalry has always been there between Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. and me, but obviously during the tour there were a lot of things said behind the cameras that made it even more intense," Canelo said at the end of a four-city press tour in mid-February.

In some ways, the seeds of the rivalry were there long before either was even born. Start with Mexican history, the nation's singular pride in boxing and a family legacy.

Julio Jr.'s dad is known as *El Gran Campeon Mexicano*, Mexico's Grand Champion. The son has his dad's name, an iconic symbol that has been both a benefit and burden.

The benefit, an inherited entitlement, came in the form of a Top Rank contract despite only two amateur bouts against another one of Mexico's boxing sons, Jorge Paez Jr. Then there was favorable matchmaking, all in return for a son with a legendary name that still has a pied piper's ability to draw a crowd.

Oscar De La Hoya knows something about beating a Chavez.

On the flip side, there was that burden. For Julio Jr., an apprentice fighting as a pro, it was a crushing inability to even approach the kind of fighter his dad was. Then again, who could?

But stories emerged about Julio Jr.'s lax training. Before a one-sided loss to then-middleweight champion Sergio Martinez, Freddie Roach, then Chavez's trainer, said that Julio Jr. trained when he felt like it, often in the wee hours after midnight at a condo in Las Vegas. The story led to jokes about Julio Jr. doing his roadwork with a few laps around the condo's couch.

Then there were subsequent positive tests for a banned diuretic and marijuana. He struggled to make weight and when he didn't, the contract was rewritten in a way that allowed him to fight as if a few extra pounds were also part of the entitlement.

All of that and more angered Mexican fans loyal to the dad and all that the name represents. First, there were boos. Then, there was contempt. The son was more Peter Pan than El Gran Campeon.

But the bout against Canelo represents a second chance, an opportunity for the son to restore his image and the family name. The best way to do that is with a victory that would rank as a significant upset. When the fight was announced on January 13, Canelo was a 4-1 favorite.

"Winning takes away a lot of the criticism," Chavez said in Los Angeles, the final stop on the press tour. "But I also feel I've been over-criticized. I get the criticism just because I am Senior's son. For all the good I do, I feel it counts for half. And any of the bad is doubled because of the limelight that's on me."

It was that criticism – fierce and dismissive after losses to Martinez in 2012 and later to Andrzej Fonfara in 2015 – that seemed to finally eliminate any chance of Julio Jr. against Canelo. Increasingly, it looked as if Canelo had emerged as Mexico's heir-apparent to Julio Sr.

Canelo is a good story with looks that make Mexicans think about another part of their history, *Los Patricios*, the Saint Patrick's Battalion of Irish immigrants who deserted during the Mexican-American War, 1846 through 1848. The Irish complained about discrimination from American Army officers. Angry, they jumped to the other side and fought for Mexico in a losing cause. Fifty were executed. Mexican soldiers called them *Los Colorados* for their red hair and sunburned faces.

Other than that familiar red head, there's nothing that links Canelo ("Cinnamon") to *Los Patricios*. Still, many of his fans see it and think about another chapter in Mexican history, older than Julio Cesar Chavez Sr., symbolic of Mexico's deep pride in its warrior past.

But Canelo's quest to be the next Julio Sr. has encountered some its own trouble, especially lately. He enters his bout with the legend's son amid pointed questions. Many have been building over the last few years. And some are not unlike those asked about Julio Jr. Critics say Golden Boy, his promoter, has matched him against opponents who were smaller, or overmatched, or both the past few years.

The chorus grew loud and nasty in the wake of a 2013 loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. The majority decision was one-sided in every way, despite a baffling draw on one scorecard.

"Embarrassing," said Rafael Mendoza, Canelo's first and former manager, who has been critical of Canelo's corner, Chepo and Eddy Reynoso.

Then there are fans further exasperated by the fact that Canelo has yet to fight Gennady Golovkin.

GGG was at ringside for Canelo's scary knockout of Amir Khan last May at T-Mobile. Canelo invited him into the ring, saying he would fight him then and there. He also said, "Mexicans don't fuck around."

About a week later, Canelo vacated his 160-pound title without any immediate plans from Golden Boy or the Reynosos for a GGG showdown in 2016. The outcry in Mexico was deafening.

There was something else, too. There was a renewed hunt for the fighter who could succeed Julio Sr. and fulfill the spirit represented by Los Patricios.

"I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. is one of the best, if not the best fighter in history," Canelo said during the L.A. leg of the press tour, which also included Mexico City, New York and Houston. "I grew up watching him and learned a lot from him, but that won't have any influence when I fight his son.

"You haven't seen the best of me. Every fight, I keep getting better. And I hope this one brings out the best in me."

Most of the pressure appears to be on young Canelo, 26. The betting odds and talk suggest that the Chavez fight is simply a stepping stone toward a proposed showdown with GGG in September. The idea is that Chavez has nothing to lose. But Ricardo Jimenez, a former sportswriter at La Opinion and a longtime publicist, disagrees.

"No," said Jimenez, who worked with Julio Jr. when both were with Top Rank. "I think that Chavez Jr.'s career is on the line and he needs a great showing to keep going. How he makes the weight will be important and how he looks in the fight will be important. I think he has a lot at stake in this fight and has to deliver a great performance for himself and for his fans."

After the press tour, there was more talk about the fight from Julio Jr. than Canelo. It's almost as if Julio Jr. is campaigning while training, selling the bout as a uniquely Mexican battle for the right to succeed his dad.

FOR THE RECORD

CANELO		CHAVEZ JR.
48-1-1 (34 KOS)	OVERALL RECORD	50-2-1 (32 KOS)
9-1 (5 KOS)	RECORD IN LAST 10 FIGHTS	8-2 (2 KOS)
10-1 (6 KOS)	RECORD IN TITLE FIGHTS	4-1 (2 KOS)
15-1 (9 KOS)	RECORD IN U.S.	32-2 (20 KOS)
33-0-1 (25)	RECORD IN MEXICO	18-0-1 (12 KOS)
7-1 (4 KOS)	RECORD IN LAS VEGAS	7-1 (3 KOS)
21-0-1 (16 KOS)	RECORD VS. MEXICANS	14-0-1 (8 KOS)

"The Mexican people are very excited and very indecisive," Chavez Jr. said in Los Angeles. "This same thing happened with Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Juan Manuel Marquez when they were in their prime. Who's the favorite?

"It feels like they're just waiting to see who wins to decide who they'll follow."

A divide between the Canelo and the Julio Jr. camps is there. But there are no numbers. There have been no polls, not that anybody believes in them anymore.

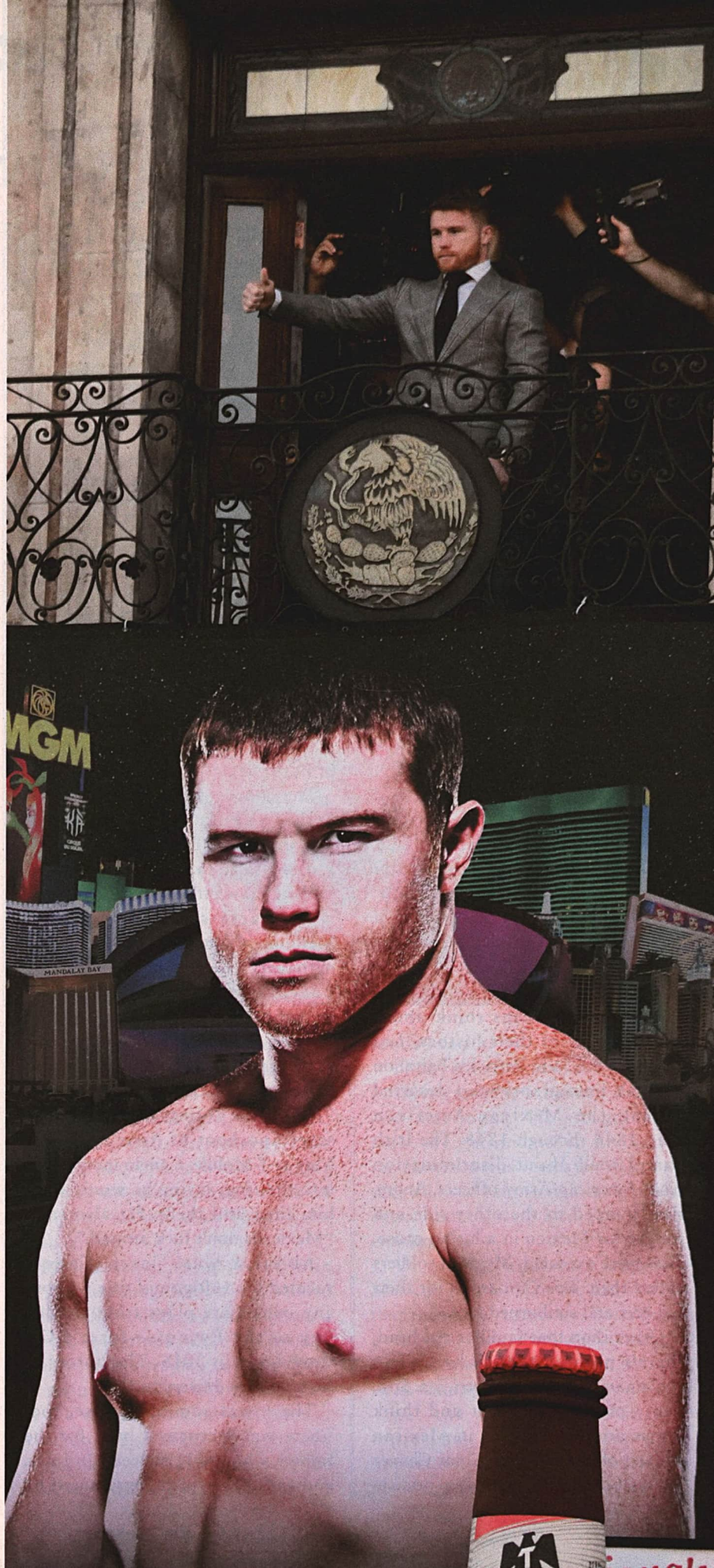
"I was told that in Mexico City the crowd was divided," Jimenez said. "In Houston it was for Canelo and in Los Angeles it was a Chavez Jr. crowd. Both guys have a lot of critics also. I think at the end of the day both guys have big fanbases and with the fans it's a 50-50 proposition."

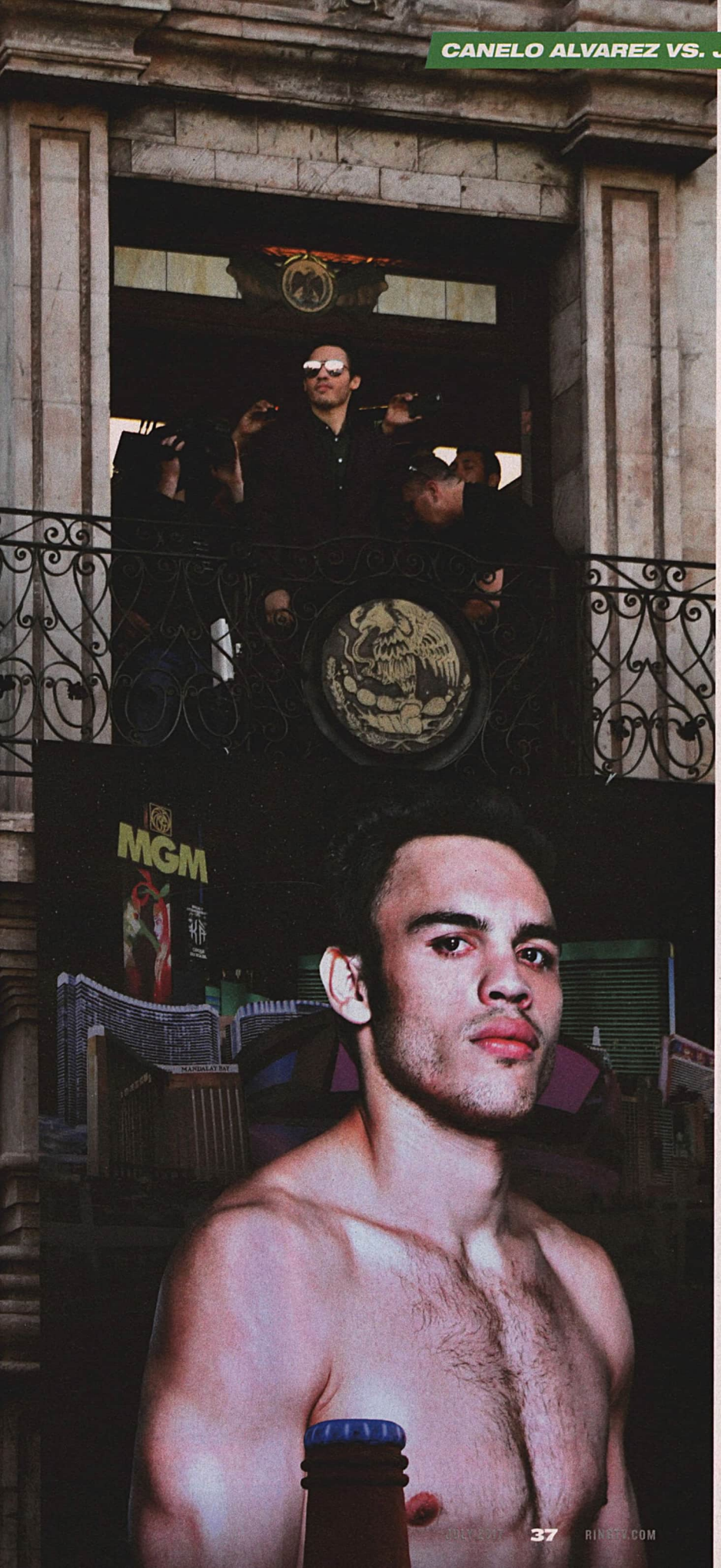
In a move that serves as a further Mexican accent on a Las Vegas fight, Julio Jr. hired Nacho Beristain. In Mexico, Beristain is to training what Julio Sr. is to fighting. He's the best ever, *El Gran Entrenador*. More important, he's a no-nonsense disciplinarian. If Julio Jr. sticks to Beristain's regimen, some say he has a real chance.

"Unlike a lot of people, I believe he has a lot skill," Top Rank's Bob Arum said of Julio Jr., who signed with Al Haymon in November 2014. "If Julio Jr. is serious, trains hard and listens to Beristain, then I give him a real chance. It's all in his hands."

It's also in his diet. The contract mandates a catchweight, 164.5 pounds. For Canelo, the weight is a move up from 154 pounds, where he has been successful. It's also seen as an important step in getting him comfortable in a heavier division in preparation for GGG, the most feared middleweight of his generation.

For Julio Jr., it's a move down the scale. That could be a challenge. His struggles are no secret. His last fight was at super middleweight, 168 pounds, in a victory over German Dominik Britsch in December. In July 2015, he missed weight against





The fighters are sometimes bigger than life to fans who attend promotional events.

Marco Reyes but was allowed to fight and win at 170 pounds, instead of 168. In April 2015, he quit after nine rounds in a 172-pound catchweight bout with Fonfara.

Julio Jr. argues that Canelo has never fought anybody his size. Fact is, Julio Jr.'s power nearly knocked out Sergio Martinez in a 12th round as wild as any at Las Vegas' Thomas & Mack five years ago. Against Martinez, his heavy hands were almost enough to offset his lack of conditioning.

Still, there are questions about whether a battle to make weight will weaken Julio Jr. for a fight that figures to include Canelo's punishing combos to the body.

"I think most people believe that Canelo will win, because he has been a more disciplined boxer and there are many questions about Julio Jr.," Jimenez said. "But Junior has his followers and a lot people think he can win the fight, because he's a bigger man and harder puncher."

It's that intense debate, perhaps, that will sell a fight that in hindsight looks preordained. Over time, it has been created by events, coincidence and cultural events – all much bigger than either Canelo or Julio Jr.

"I was surprised how big the fight is to so many fans," Jimenez said. "I was at the L.A. press conference and the press and fans turnout was huge. I think the timing of the fight is perfect for both guys.

"It's hard to say it's a big fight as a boxing match, but it is a big event. Both Canelo and Chavez have huge followings. I don't think two Mexican fighters in a pay-per-view main event have ever drawn this kind of attention. Their popularity and their personal grudge make it a big fight."

Big enough maybe to even make some history. RING

¡VIVA MEXICO!

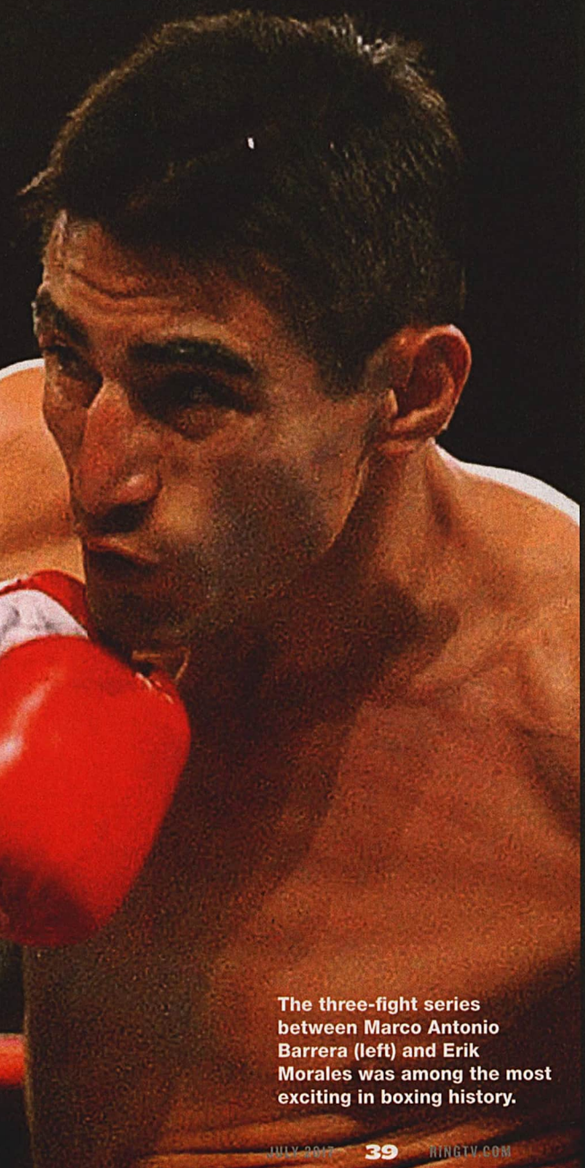
A LOOK BACK AT FIVE OF THE BEST ALL-MEXICAN RIVALRIES

By **Tom Gray**

Many great Mexican fighters turned to professional boxing in their mid-teens and were grown men way before their time. Unending sacrifice, brutal training regimens, debilitating punishment and searing heat could not quell their passion to become legends from arguably the most boxing-rich country in the world.

Expectations from fans are always high when a Mexican fighter enters a prize ring, higher still when another Mexican fighter is in the opposing corner. This mutual machismo has led to spontaneous combustion in some of the best fights in boxing history. Many of these brutal all-Mexican rivalries remain timeless and some of the stories extend beyond the ropes.

On May 6, Canelo Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. will square off at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, and the pressure will be on to match the fire and intensity of their predecessors. What follows is a retrospective analysis of five Mexican boxing rivalries that Alvarez and Chavez will hopefully honor when they do battle on Cinco De Mayo weekend.



The three-fight series between Marco Antonio Barrera (left) and Erik Morales was among the most exciting in boxing history.

RUBEN OLIVARES vs. CHUCHO CASTILLO

The rivalry: Three fights (Olivares UD 15; Castillo TKO 14; Olivares UD 15)
Years: 1970-71

The Forum in Inglewood, California, played host to an explosive bantamweight trilogy that was completed inside a single year.

On April 18, 1970, undisputed champion Olivares made the second defense of his title against Castillo in a battle for Mexico City. The 23-year-old Olivares was unbeaten in 58 contests and firmly established as one of the finest fighters in the world. But while Castillo lacked Olivares' finesse and nearly perfect record, he was gutsy and packed a punch. The champion would find that out to his detriment.

After controlling the first two rounds, Olivares was nailed by a counter right hand that put him down briefly in the third. When he rose, but before the referee intervened with the count, Castillo immediately tagged him again with a left hook-right hand combination. The crowd was in an uproar at the rare sight of Olivares being shaken, although the champion responded in style.

Olivares was the superior boxer throughout the remainder of the contest and retained his title by unanimous decision. However, there was enough hype surrounding the first encounter to warrant a rematch.

Six months later the tables turned. Castillo opened a cut around Olivares' right eye in the opening round and, although the champion boxed brilliantly, the injury got progressively worse as the fight wore on. This time, Olivares was forced into inside exchanges and Castillo held his ground. In the 14th round, with the champion's face a grotesque crimson mask, referee Dick Young elected to stop the fight.

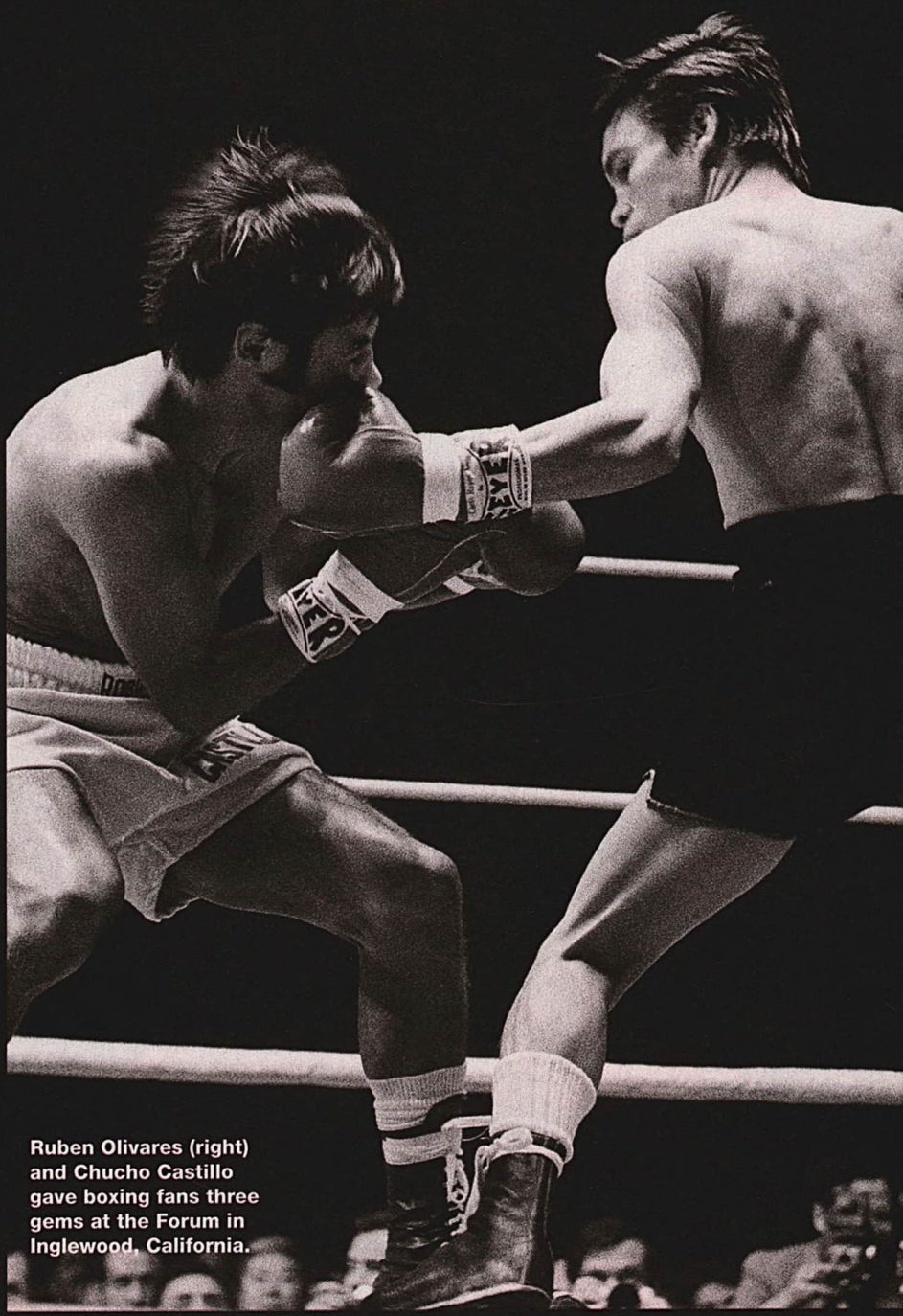
The public demanded the rubber

match and on April 2, 1971, they were treated to a more savage version of the first fight. Once again Olivares hit the canvas, this time in Round 6, and once again he responded with the superior ring craft. This time his victory was more dominating and Castillo absorbed fierce body punishment before losing another 15-round unanimous decision.

"It was a terrific rivalry and the whole town was going crazy for them," recalled former promoter and matchmaker Don Chargin, who was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2001. "Ruben probably had the biggest personality of any fighter I've ever seen. He liked the nightlife but he was always a good kid. Castillo was much more reserved and a completely different type of person. He was a good all-around boxer, but Ruben was one of the best bantamweights ever and one of the best body-punchers ever. That was always his equalizer. He had a left hook to the body that paralyzed people."

CARLOS ZARATE vs. ALFONSO ZAMORA

The rivalry: One fight (Zarate TKO 4)
Year: 1977



Ruben Olivares (right) and Chucho Castillo gave boxing fans three gems at the Forum in Inglewood, California.

What didn't happen in this one? On April 23, 1977, Carlos Zarate, the WBC bantamweight titleholder, and Alfonso Zamora, the RING and WBA bantamweight champion, met up in a 10-round non-title bout at The Forum in Inglewood, California.

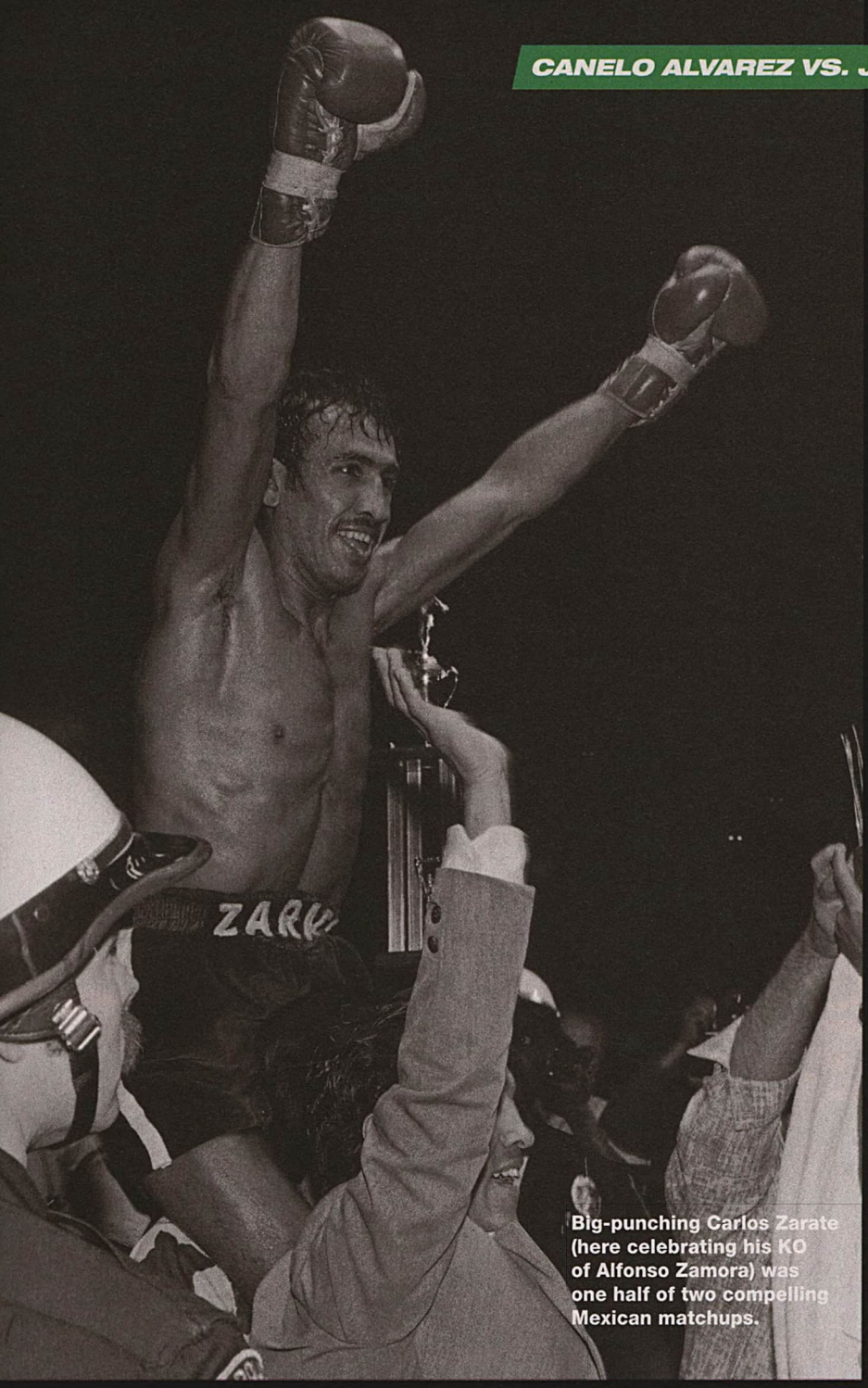
Both Mexico City stars were authentic knockout artists. How authentic? Coming in, they had a combined 73 knockouts in 74 fights. This state-of-the-art weaponry, combined with the fact that there was real animosity between both camps, meant that "The Battle of the Z Boys" was hotly anticipated.

In Round 1, the fight was momentarily interrupted in a bizarre scene: A man dressed in his underwear leaped between the ropes and was quickly confronted by police officers. He was immobilized, thrown out of the ring and dragged from the arena as both fighters looked on in amazement.

When the action commenced, Zamora appeared to be the least distracted. He got inside on the much taller Zarate and unloaded a crisp left hook that had an effect. Zarate fired back, however, and took complete control. Firecrackers, lit inside the arena, accompanied the action as Zarate snapped his countryman's head back repeatedly.

A strong second round was followed by a torrent of punishment in the third and Zamora was finally floored by a right hand. The damage was done. Zarate scored two more knockdowns in the fourth, courtesy of left hooks, which forced Alfonso Zamora Sr. to throw in the towel.

Frenzied fans didn't wait long for



Big-punching Carlos Zarate (here celebrating his KO of Alfonso Zamora) was one half of two compelling Mexican matchups.

an encore. Following the contest, Zamora Sr. stormed the ring and attacked Zarate's manager, Arturo "Cuyo" Hernandez. Months prior to the contest, Zamora Sr. had bought his son's managerial contract from Hernandez and a fierce war or words had ensued through the local press. The brawl was broken up by police, who were kept busy that night.

"It was all political," Chargin said. "Initially Hernandez was going to stay out of the fight and then he went with Zarate. Zamora Sr. took great offense to that and things got out of control. Zarate and Zamora were really good punchers. I once had a fighter called Alberto Sandoval, who was closing in on a title shot. This kid was selling out the Olympic Auditorium, packing the place, and doing really good. I put him in with Zamora and he got flattened. Zamora just couldn't do anything with Zarate. There was no doubt who the better fighter was."

CARLOS ZARATE vs. LUPE PINTOR

The rivalry: One fight (Pintor SD 15)
Year: 1979

Following the Zamora victory, Zarate defended his belt on five more occasions before challenging Puerto Rican rival Wilfredo Gomez for a junior featherweight title. He lost by fifth-round stoppage and wisely returned to bantamweight.

On June 3, 1979, Zarate made his 10th title defense against Mexico City puncher Lupe Pintor at the Caesars Palace Sports Pavilion in Las Vegas. Pintor, a novice by comparison, was a former stablemate and a huge underdog against the vastly more experienced champion.

The action was nip and tuck over the first three rounds before Zarate unleashed a right lead-left hook combination that floored Pintor. The challenger was up immediately and gamely fought his way back into the contest. Pintor did enjoy success, particularly with the left hook, but Zarate's work rate and sharpshooting off the back foot appeared to be carrying the day.

Pintor sustained a cut around his right eye and his nose was blooded in the final third of the bout. As the championship rounds progressed, Zarate's lead seemed to have widened and he had controlled the pace well. It wasn't enough. At the end of 15 rounds, the first time either man had gone that distance, Pintor was awarded a hotly disputed split decision.

Judge Bob Martin gave the fight to Zarate 145-133, but he was overruled by Art Lurie and Harold Buck, who scored 143-142 in favor of the challenger.

The 23-year-old Pintor looked shocked to have been given the verdict and Zarate refused to look his countryman in the eye when the pair came together at ring center.

"I thought it was a very close

fight," said Chargin, who would later promote Pintor and acknowledged that he might be "a little prejudiced."

"It was an important victory for Pintor and he went on to have a great career. We got together at the Hall of Fame last year (when Pintor was inducted) and it was good to see him. That was a great fight with Zarate but, at the time, I honestly thought it was close and both fought very well."

Pintor developed into a terrific professional. He defended his belt eight times and won a junior featherweight title in 1985. Zarate, a magnificent puncher who was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1994, was bitterly disappointed by the loss and didn't fight again for more than six years. He was defeated by Jeff Fenech and Daniel Zaragoza in title fights when he was well past his best.

Two of the four Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez fights were named RING Fight of the Year.

ERIK MORALES vs. MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

The rivalry: Three fights (Morales SD 12; Barrera UD 12; Barrera MD 12)
Years: 2000-04

Legend has it that this rivalry started because of an over-the-top challenge during a soccer game. However, when the action moved to the four corners of a prize ring, Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales electrified the boxing world in a trilogy that spanned four years and three weight divisions.

Their first bout was contested at junior featherweight on February 19, 2000. Both men were titleholders, but the unbeaten Morales was a 4-1 favorite coming in. Those odds were supported by the fact that Barrera had lost twice to Junior Jones, whereas Morales had crushed the American boxer-puncher inside four rounds. That statistic proved to be completely irrelevant.

Ringside seats were only $300 and approximately 7,000 people turned up at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas for one of the greatest fights of all time. A rejuvenated Barrera attacked Morales up and down with brutal combination work and Morales countered with vicious shots of his own. The ebb and flow, the pace and the ferocity of the combat was incredible.

Morales claimed a controversial 12-round split decision in the RING Fight of the Year and the curtain had risen on one of the most potent rivalries in boxing history.

"The wonderful thing was from the first fight through the third fight, these guys hated each other," said Hall of Fame promoter Bob Arum, who represented Morales on behalf of Top Rank. "There was a tremendous rivalry because Barrera was from Mexico City and Morales was from Tijuana. At the press conference ahead of their second fight, Barrera referred to Morales as a dumb Indian and Morales called him a white snob. Suddenly punches started flying, and these guys weren't fucking around."

The rematch took place on June 22, 2002, and while it may not have lived up to their original encounter, it was still an entertaining battle between great fighters. Morales, now a featherweight titleholder, had the edge early, but Barrera upped the pace in the second half to earn himself a questionable 12-round unanimous decision.

The rubber match took place on November 27, 2004. This chapter, another RING Fight of the Year, had shades of the first encounter as Barrera let loose early. He raked Morales with rapid combinations, damaged his nose with a brutal left uppercut and was the classier operator over 12 enthralling rounds. "The Baby-Faced Assassin" claimed the WBC junior lightweight title via majority decision and emerged victorious in a trilogy for the ages.

ISRAEL VAZQUEZ-RAFAEL MARQUEZ

The rivalry: Four fights (Marquez TKO 7; Vazquez TKO 6: Vazquez SD 12; Marquez TKO 3)
Years: 2007-10

As Barrera and Morales began a slow fade, two worthy successors emerged to continue the tradition of red-hot Mexican rivalries.

On March 3, 2007, Rafael Marquez stepped up from bantamweight to junior featherweight to challenge countryman Israel Vazquez for the RING and WBC titles. Both fighters respected each other immensely but traded bombs in a classic battle. Marquez went down from a short left hook in the third round but came back to break Vazquez's nose, an injury which would bring about a seventh-round corner retirement.

The rematch, five months later, would be the RING Fight of the Year. Marquez was stunned in another wild third round but rallied to back up his rival with tremendous flurries. Both men were cut and marked up badly by the sixth round, when Vazquez decked Marquez with a superb left hook. Marquez was unable to recover, although many felt that referee Guadalupe Garcia stopped the fight prematurely.

Amazingly, the best was yet to come in Vazquez-Marquez III in 2008. Vazquez was down in a memorable fourth round and when he got to his feet, his return fire almost floored Marquez seconds later. Both Mexico City stars unloaded everything they had in another RING Fight of the Year.

A sizzling three-minute assault by Vazquez in the final round, which culminated in a late knockdown, secured a 12-round split decision in his favor.

"I always feel proud when I think of the trilogy with my fellow Mexican warrior," said Vazquez of the rivalry that took the careers of both fighters to new heights.. "It was special because few fighters did something like that. I was always excited to fight [Marquez] because we are fighters. I was excited about the possibility of making history every time we fought."

A fourth bout generated a lot of money but was a letdown by comparison. Vazquez entered the ring a shell of himself and scar tissue around his eyes was a handicap before a punch was thrown. Gruesome cuts prompted the referee to stop the fight in the third round and the rivalry ended at two wins apiece.

It is often said that fighters leave a piece of themselves in the ring after grueling wars. Within the last year, Vazquez, an amiable and charismatic man, had an operation to remove his right eye in part because of injuries sustained in his final encounter with Marquez. Mexican warrior that he is, he said there are no regrets. RING

Canelo (left) emerges as a clear favorite over Chavez Jr. in our analysis.

WIPE OUT?

HEAD TO HEAD: THE RING ANALYSIS

By **Tom Gray**

"Will it be better late than never or better never than late?"

That was the question then-HBO broadcaster Larry Merchant asked ahead of the 1987 superfight between Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Sugar Ray Leonard. Two legendary fighters were meeting up five years after the idea of them getting together was originally hatched and, luckily, the matchup exceeded expectations.

Hotly anticipated fights rarely happen when they're supposed to. And when they do come around, it's hit or miss. Mike Tyson vs. Evander Holyfield was six years in the making and their first encounter was certainly better late than never. Conversely, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao negotiated for an equal length of time – they brought the boxing world to a standstill – and then provided a fistic cure for insomnia.

An all-Mexico showdown between Canelo Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. was first suggested back in 2012. At that time, the 22-year-old Alvarez was a WBC junior middleweight belt holder who was learning on the job. Unquestionably talented, he was still to be tested at top level but his potential at such a young age seemed unlimited. Chavez, then 26 years old, held the WBC middleweight title. And while deprived of his famous father's skillset, he had certainly inherited his durability and thirst for combat.

The fight looked like a natural. Then paths diverged.

Canelo, despite a one-sided loss to Mayweather in 2013, would go on to become the biggest draw in boxing after beating Erislandy Lara (SD 12), James Kirkland (KO 3) and Miguel Cotto (UD 12). Now armed with a mixture of world title belts in the junior middleweight and middleweight divisions, Canelo appears destined to square off against the fearsome Gennady Golovkin but – again – hotly anticipated fights rarely happen when they're supposed to.

And that's where "The Son of the Legend" comes in.

Following three successful title defenses, Chavez was defeated on points by Sergio Martinez in September 2012. The setback was devastating and his career has never fully recovered. Chavez defeated Brian Vera twice but was listless in each fight and his luck finally ran out against Polish contender Andrzej Fonfara, who battered him en route to a ninth-round stoppage in April 2015. Two decisions over undistinguished opposition got him back in the win column but this fight against Canelo is a massive undertaking.

The Mexican duo will fight at a 164½-pound catchweight on May 6 at the swanky T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. The certainty of Cinco de Mayo celebrations and the historical rivalry between the pair have led to a complete sellout and the event also promises to do big numbers on pay-per-view.

How do the participants match up five years down the line? THE RING analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of both men by applying scores between 0-5 in key areas to come up with the answers. »

HAND SPEED
Canelo is not Meldrick Taylor but he has much faster hands than Chavez Jr. He switches well from head to body and lets his hands go in short, controlled bursts. Chavez has never been known for hand speed.
Canelo
Chavez

FOOTWORK
Canelo is adept at positioning his feet to set up counterpunching opportunities, as evidenced in his fight with Miguel Cotto. Chavez is always looking to close the gap and, while he doesn't do that with much finesse, a peak version got there more often than not.
Canelo
Chavez

POWER (LEAD HAND)
The left hook is probably Chavez's best punch. On the inside he releases it constantly and it can have a debilitating effect over time. Canelo has more variety with his left hand work and he is more likely to hurt an opponent with a single punch.
Canelo
Chavez

POWER (TRAIL HAND)
The power in Canelo's right hand has improved in recent years. It decked Austin Trout and knocked out both James Kirkland and Amir Khan on impact. Chavez has good range on his right hand but more often than not he uses it as a set up shot for body punching, or he clubs opponents with it up close.
Canelo
Chavez

JAB
Canelo has an accurate and steady stick, which he uses to set up a varied and elaborate offense. Chavez isn't interested in using a punch unless it is guaranteed to drain the opponent. He therefore neglects this shot almost completely.
Canelo
Chavez

HOOK
This is Chavez's office. When he gets inside, Chavez unloads hooks around the guard and works the body to good effect with both hands. He might take punches to get inside but he is capable of evening the score once he gets there. Canelo's left hook to the body and head is very strong.
Canelo
Chavez

CROSS/UPPERCUT
Chavez has good length on the right cross and delivers it well. As with the hook, Chavez is also adept with the uppercut on the inside and can score cleanly with both hands. Canelo can damage an opponent with a single right cross and his uppercuts on both sides are ferocious as leads or counters.
Canelo
Chavez

BODY PUNCHING
The staple of Chavez's offense. Chavez has been known to fall behind in fights but he exacts a cost with an energy-sapping body assault. Canelo is a very good body-puncher but doesn't rely on it as much as Chavez.
Canelo
Chavez

INFIGHTING SKILLS
If the rules required boxers to fight exclusively on the inside Chavez would be delighted. That's where he does his best work. Canelo can find some nifty counters up close, but he has developed into a cerebral boxer-puncher who does his best work on the outside and at mid-range.
Canelo
Chavez

ATHLETICISM
Canelo is the better athlete of the two. He is quicker, sharper and possesses much better reflexes. Chavez makes up for his lack of athleticism by applying constant pressure in the hope of wearing down more gifted competition.
Canelo
Chavez

ENDURANCE
Chavez was considered almost bulletproof prior to being stopped by Fonfara, but poor lifestyle and the higher weight class might have contributed to his downfall. A fully fit version at 164½ pounds won't be easy to shift. Canelo has been in with the best and has taken his fair share of punches without capitulating in any way.
Canelo
Chavez

ABILITY TO SLIP AND BLOCK PUNCHES
Canelo has improved dramatically in his ability to slip punches. In the fight with Cotto he drew several leads from the legendary Puerto Rican, avoided them and countered with explosive single shots. He can catch and shoot well too. Defense is not an area where Chavez excels. He will happily take punches in order to land his own.
Canelo
Chavez

PHYSICAL CONDITION
Call it no contest. While Chavez has won many fights by virtue of his fitness, he has betrayed himself through lack of discipline in recent years. He might get it together for this fight but will his past exploits catch up with him? Canelo is a brilliantly conditioned fighter who has never been found wanting in this area.
Canelo
Chavez

POISE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL PRESSURES
Chavez has been around the big-fight atmosphere since he was a child and is ice-cool on the big stage. The same can be said of Canelo, who has been a professional fighter since he was 15 years old. Neither fighter is easily fazed.
Canelo
Chavez

KILLER INSTINCT
Both excel in this area in different ways. Chavez is obsessed with beating down the opposition until they submit, whereas if Canelo hurts an opponent with something big, he is a ruthless finisher.
Canelo
Chavez

INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC DEXTERITY
Canelo has developed into a terrific boxer-puncher. His skills were evident against Cotto but he also began to outbox the super-quick Khan, prior to landing one concussive bomb. Chavez is not known for versatility. He is more of a one-trick pony who seeks to wear you down by attrition.
Canelo
Chavez

CHIN AND RESILIENCE
Assuming Chavez is as durable as he was in his middleweight heyday, then his chin is superb. Jose Cotto almost floored Canelo with a left hand a few years ago but that seemed like a balance shot. Canelo has shown a very good chin against the best in the business.
Canelo
Chavez

EXPERIENCE
Canelo has pulled away in recent years. Since September 2012, the best opponent Chavez has faced is Fonfara, who stopped him. Canelo has won seven of eight fights since then and six of his opponents were reigning or former world titleholders.
Canelo
Chavez

QUALITY OF OPPONENTS
Both have mixed with quality opposition. Chavez has wins over Sebastian Zbik, Marco Antonio Rubio and Andy Lee. He also came damn close to outlasting Martinez. The difference is that Canelo has been mixing with the best recently: Mayweather, Trout, Lara and Cotto in particular.
Canelo
Chavez

CORNER
This is deceiving. Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain, who will be working with Chavez, is one of the finest trainers in boxing history. However, you can only work with what you have. Canelo's trainer, Eddy Reynoso, has done a wonderful job of developing his charge into an elite-level operator.
Canelo 4.5
Chavez 4.5

TOTAL:
ALVAREZ: 83.5
(Single category average 4.2)
CHAVEZ JR: 72.5
(Single category average 3.6)

SUMMARY AND PREDICTION: Canelo has a significant overall advantage in the 20 categories, which is reflected in the betting odds. Chavez is a 5-1 underdog to upset his countryman and there are two very good reasons for that. Canelo, who was a hot young talent when the fight was first discussed, has improved dramatically over the last few years. Chavez has gone backward and lost his way. It's an intriguing fight because of their history and the energy created by the national rivalry. Very honestly, though, this is Canelo's fight to lose, even though he is at a size disadvantage. A few pounds and inches just don't make up for the gulf in quality. • **CANELO TKO 8** RING

HALL OF FAME 2017

'IT'S ABOUT NOT QUITTING'

EVANDER HOLYFIELD WILL BE REMEMBERED AS MUCH FOR HIS DETERMINATION AS FOR HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By **Ron Borges**

Something was going on over there, behind that little fence. Something mysterious. Of that Evander Holyfield was quite sure. But what was it?

What was inside that secret world where the only sounds you heard were leather bags being pounded and leather gloves pop, pop, popping when they landed? How do you get in there, anyway? What's the key?

As things turned out, 8-year-old Evander Holyfield, all 65 pounds of him, already had the key buried deep inside him. No one knew it yet, of course, not even the skinny little kid himself – the one with the big dream

Evander Holyfield (left) displayed against rugged Dwight Muhammad Qawi the kind of grit that would endear him to fans around the world.

AP

of playing for the Atlanta Falcons one day.

No one who saw him thought such a dream possible. Not the smallest kid at the Warren Memorial Boys Club, which was a building full of dreamers set amidst the grinding poverty of Holyfield's Atlanta neighborhood. Yes, he is quick and agile and relentless, but look at him. Too small, they said, and those doubters were right. Evander Holyfield wasn't destined to play for the Atlanta Falcons. He was destined for something bigger.

After weeks of begging a stern white man named Carter Morgan to let him inside, Holyfield finally was allowed through the fence that separated football players, basketball players, baseball players and all the other kids from the hard-nosed little warriors inside. What he found there would change his life and boxing history.

Evander Holyfield found his home.

For the next 40 years, the boxing ring would be the place where Holyfield found peace even as he made war. He would defeat the greatest fighters of his time, nearly all much bigger than he was, although only on the outside. On the inside, no one was bigger than Evander Holyfield.

"My momma said, 'If you don't quit, you'll get there,'" Holyfield recalled recently. "I listened to her. My coaches would tell me, 'You didn't lose. You just didn't get the decision. You only lose when you stop.' I didn't stop."

Indeed he did not. By the time Holyfield finally retired at the age of 48 (and then again at 51), he'd become one of the biggest names in boxing history. He was not only the greatest cruiserweight of all time, and that division's undisputed champion when he relinquished the title after defeating Carlos De Leon in 1988 to move up to heavyweight at barely 200 pounds, but he would become the only boxer to win the heavyweight title four times. He had, in the end, not only proven he

MODERN

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

ACTIVE: 1989-2011
RECORD: 67-7 (44 KOs)
BACKGROUND: The "Baby-Faced Assassin" was one of the most consistent fighters of his generation, as he won seven major titles in three weight divisions over more than two decades. And he never shied away from a challenge. He's best known for his thrilling trilogy with countryman Erik Morales, whom Barrera defeated twice, but his resume is filled with big names. He was a smart boxer with great fighting spirit, a combination that made him a fan favorite.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD

ACTIVE: 1984-2011
RECORD: 44-10-2 (29 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Holyfield was indeed the "Real Deal." He is recognized as the best cruiserweight of all time – he was 18-0 (14 KOs) at 190 pounds and was unified champion – and then became the only heavyweight to win the title four times, giving us some of the most memorable fights ever along the way. One can only imagine what he would've accomplished if he was a natural heavyweight. As it was, his blend of ability, ferocity and resilience made him one of the best ever.

JOHNNY TAPIA

ACTIVE: 1988-2011
RECORD: 59-5-2 (30 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Tapia, who died at 45 in 2012, is known for living on the edge outside the ring. That's where his nickname – "Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life)" – comes from. The craziness sometimes eclipses his remarkable ability and warrior mentality, though – he won major titles in three divisions in entertaining fashion. Tapia was a good athlete and excellent technician who loved to fight, all of which made him very difficult to beat and a major attraction during his peak.

OLD-TIMER

EDDIE BOOKER

ACTIVE: 1935-44
RECORD: 66-5-8 (34 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Booker was among the best on an all-too-long list of black fighters who received relatively few opportunities in boxing. He made the most of the ones he got, though, mostly on the West Coast. "Black Dynamite" was a superb boxer – particularly his defensive skills – but wasn't afraid to mix it up when he had to. He proved it against some of the best fighters of his era, beating Lloyd Marshall, Holman Williams and the legendary Archie Moore, among others. He never fought for a world title but those who saw him fight know how special Eddie Booker was.

NON-PARTICIPANT

JIMMY LENNON SR.

POSITION: Ring announcer
BACKGROUND: It's no secret where Jimmy Lennon Jr. got his silky voice and professionalism. Dad, who joins his son in the Hall, was a beloved announcer for more than three decades.

JOHNNY LEWIS

POSITION: Trainer
BACKGROUND: Lewis is a boxing institution in Australia, as he has trained fighters there for more than a half century. Among his many proteges: Joe Bugner, Jeff Fenech and Kostya Tszyu.

JERRY ROTH

POSITION: Judge
BACKGROUND: The recently retired Nevada judge worked a reported 225 world title fights over three and half decades at ringside, making him one of his state's leading officials.

OBSERVER

STEVE FARHOOD

POSITION: Broadcaster and journalist
BACKGROUND: The former editor of THE RING Magazine is an accomplished writer, editor, historian and television analyst known for his depth of knowledge and integrity.

BARRY TOMPKINS

POSITION: Broadcaster
BACKGROUND: Tompkins has one of the most recognizable voices in boxing, as he has called some of the biggest fights in the sport since 1980. He is still going strong.

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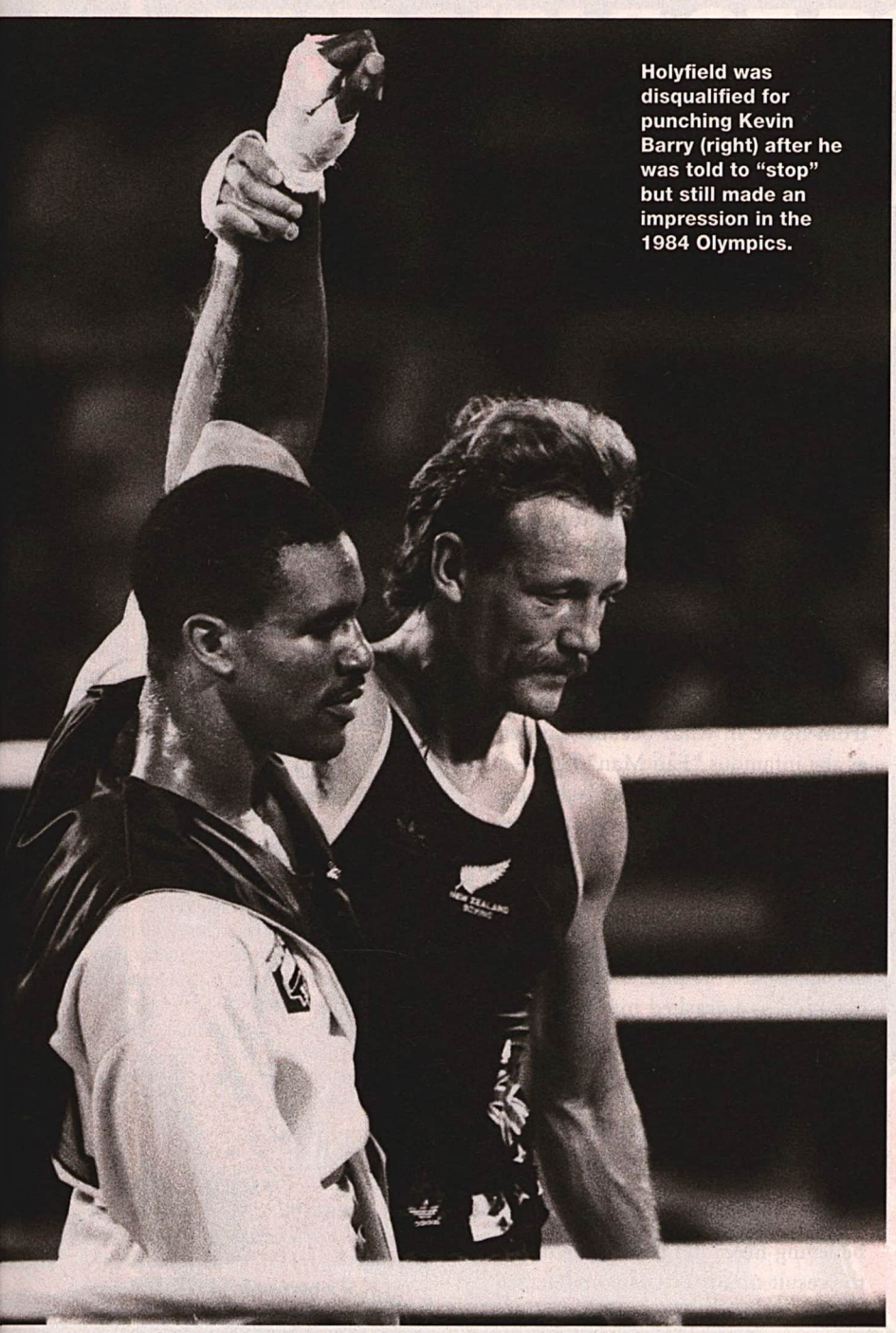

Holyfield was disqualified for punching Kevin Barry (right) after he was told to "stop" but still made an impression in the 1984 Olympics.

belonged behind that little fence, but that he belonged in the International Boxing Hall of Fame, where he will be inducted in June.

"I'm honored by it because my work indicates I should be there," Holyfield said of his election. "When I was 8 years old my coach told me I could be like Muhammad Ali. He told me I could become heavyweight champion of the world. I believed him.

"That was a while ago. I was 8 when I started dreaming and 28 when it happened. I went through a lot for that dream."

Doubt was one of those things he had to conquer. Not so much self-doubt, although there was some of that, but more the doubters around him who for so long seemed to see him as less than the fighter he truly was.

But Holyfield fervently believed in himself and in God, who he always felt would protect him even when others feared for his well-being. Holyfield never thought the bargain with God was that he would win, only that He would give him the strength to endure whatever he must. That, when you boil down all that Holyfield became, was his hallmark.

There was no pain he would not endure to win. There was no challenge he would not face to win. There was no fear he would not conquer to win. As talented as he was as a fighter and as gifted as he was in so many ways physically, such that he was able to first win the heavyweight title at only 206 pounds, his greatest strength was his mentality.

Holyfield once said, "If you are not strong mentally, you are not strong anywhere." No fighter ever did more to prove the truth of that than he did, enduring at 22 the stinging disappointment of being disqualified unfairly in a semifinal bout at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. The decision was so absurd that New Zealander Kevin Barry, who was badly beaten but declared the winner, held up Holyfield's hand. Holyfield accepted that disappointment without complaint.

He would endure a withering, toe-to-toe attack in only his 12th professional fight to take the cruiserweight title away from a rock of a man named Dwight Muhammad Qawi. It was a 15-round fight still considered the greatest cruiserweight match of all time. After unifying the three existing belts two years later, he abandoned the division to move up to heavyweight, a decision few in boxing thought wise because the era of the giant heavyweight had begun. Against men the size of Riddick Bowe, George Foreman, Buster Douglas and later Lennox Lewis, he was a Lilliputian. Of course, his doubters never weighed his heart.

Although by 1988 boxing aficionados had begun to give Holyfield his due, few felt his quest to win the heavyweight title would be

fruitful. Lean and sculpted, he looked nothing like the image most people carried of a heavyweight boxer. But he slowly built himself into a 215-pound fighting machine with a chin that could not be dented, a will that could not be broken and considerably more punching power than many thought until they found themselves on the wrong end of his fists.

Twice he was scheduled to face the most feared man in boxing, Mike Tyson, but fate intervened. The first date was June 18, 1990, in Atlantic City. Tyson was the undisputed champion and Holyfield the undisputed No. 1 contender. Tyson was to earn $22 million guaranteed and Holyfield $11 million, which were unheard-of numbers in those early days of pay-per-view, but the fight never happened because Tyson was upset in stunning fashion by Douglas, a 42-1 underdog. Holyfield stood at ringside that day, as stunned as the crowd, and said it didn't matter because his goal was never to beat Mike Tyson, despite the rivalry dating back to their amateur days.

"I didn't move up to fight a certain person," Holyfield recalled. "I became the No. 1 contender but I wasn't chasing Mike Tyson. I moved up to become undisputed heavyweight champion of the world."

He would accomplish that for the first time on October 25, 1990, knocking out an out-of-shape Douglas with a thunderous right counter to the nose after Douglas missed an ill-advised uppercut in the third round. By then, Holyfield had landed 66 of the first 100 punches he'd thrown and the last one sent the far bigger man to the canvas. There Douglas lay on his back, rubbing his nose with his glove as referee Mills Lane counted him out.

Holyfield had achieved his dream 20 years after first walking behind that little fence, but the world insisted he do more. Until he beat Tyson there would remain a dispute over who was the undisputed baddest man on the planet.

The fight was again set to happen on November 8, 1991, at Caesars Palace when Tyson was indicted on rape charges. Even then it was supposed to go forward but on October 19, Tyson claimed to have suffered a rib injury and the bout was canceled. He was later convicted and served three years in an Indiana prison. All told, it would be six years before they would finally meet and by then many things had changed.

During those years, Holyfield would lose the title to Riddick Bowe in a ferocious fight punctuated by a 10th round in which Holyfield was in significant trouble and looked out on his feet, only to rally back and stagger the bigger man, taking him into equally troubled waters. When the bell sounded to end it, the two slapped each other on the belly, joyous in the mutual carnage they were sharing.

Holyfield would lose a decision that night but won the title back from Bowe in what became known as the infamous "Fan Man" fight – a man literally flew into the ring at the outdoor arena behind Caesars Palace at a time when the momentum was shifting in Holyfield's favor.

The fight was delayed for some time as chaos reigned near Bowe's corner, where the pilot and his flying machine had crashed into the ropes and turnbuckle. When order was restored, Bowe seemed unsettled but Holyfield fought on, winning a majority decision and the IBF, WBA and lineal titles a second time.

He would lose them to Michael Moorer in his next fight, doctors believing his lethargy that night was the result of a previously undetected hole in his heart. Long suffering from chronic problems with dehydration, Holyfield quickly announced his retirement but the doctors' diagnosis was later found to be incorrect. He claimed to have been "healed" by a televangelist named Benny Hinn during a revival meeting, the "healing" coming not long after he'd written Hinn a large check to aid in his ministry.

Skeptical, the Nevada State Athletic Commission initially refused to license him and later forced him to submit to

EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S GREATEST HITS

The five most important victories in Holyfield's career.

DWIGHT MUHAMMAD QAWI

Date: July 12, 1986 • **Site:** The Omni, Atlanta • **Result:** SD 12 • **Background:** Holyfield calls this his toughest fight. Qawi was a sort of smaller version of Joe Frazier, a squat, strong whirling dervish. And Holyfield battled him head-on, engaging in some of the wildest exchanges in cruiserweight history. When it was over, Holyfield was declared the winner by a split decision. It was his peak moment at 190 pounds.

BUSTER DOUGLAS

Date: October 25, 1990 • **Site:** Mirage, Las Vegas • **Result:** KO 3 • **Background:** Holyfield was supposed to challenge Mike Tyson for the undisputed heavyweight title but a highly motivated Douglas changed that with his historic upset of Tyson the previous February. That version of Douglas evidently didn't show up in his first defense, as Holyfield needed less than three rounds to begin the first of his four runs as a heavyweight titleholder.

RIDDICK BOWE II

Date: November 6, 1993 • **Site:** Caesars Palace, Las Vegas • **Result:** MD 12 • **Background:** This fight is remembered most for the "Fan Man," the idiotic paraglider who crashed into the ring ropes. That overshadows what might've been Holyfield's finest performance, as he outslugged and outlasted his then-unbeaten and much bigger (by 2½ inches and 29 pounds) opponent. Holyfield lost his two other fights with Bowe.

MIKE TYSON I

Date: November 9, 1996 • **Site:** MGM Grand, Las Vegas • **Result:** TKO 11 • **Background:** Tyson was as much as a 25-1 favorite, which was another way of saying Holyfield had virtually no chance. Almost no one believed in him. He did, though. Holyfield not only stood up to Iron Mike's dangerous advances but responded in kind, ultimately wearing him down and stopping him in the 11th round. It was the biggest victory of his career.

MICHAEL MOORER II

Date: November 8, 1997 • **Site:** Thomas & Mack, Las Vegas • **Result:** KO 8 • **Background:** Holyfield said after a majority-decision loss to Moorer in April 1994 that he had injured his shoulder in the fight. However, the fact remained Moorer took his title. Holyfield exacted revenge three years later, putting the capable Moorer down five times before finally finishing the job in the eighth round to unify two titles.

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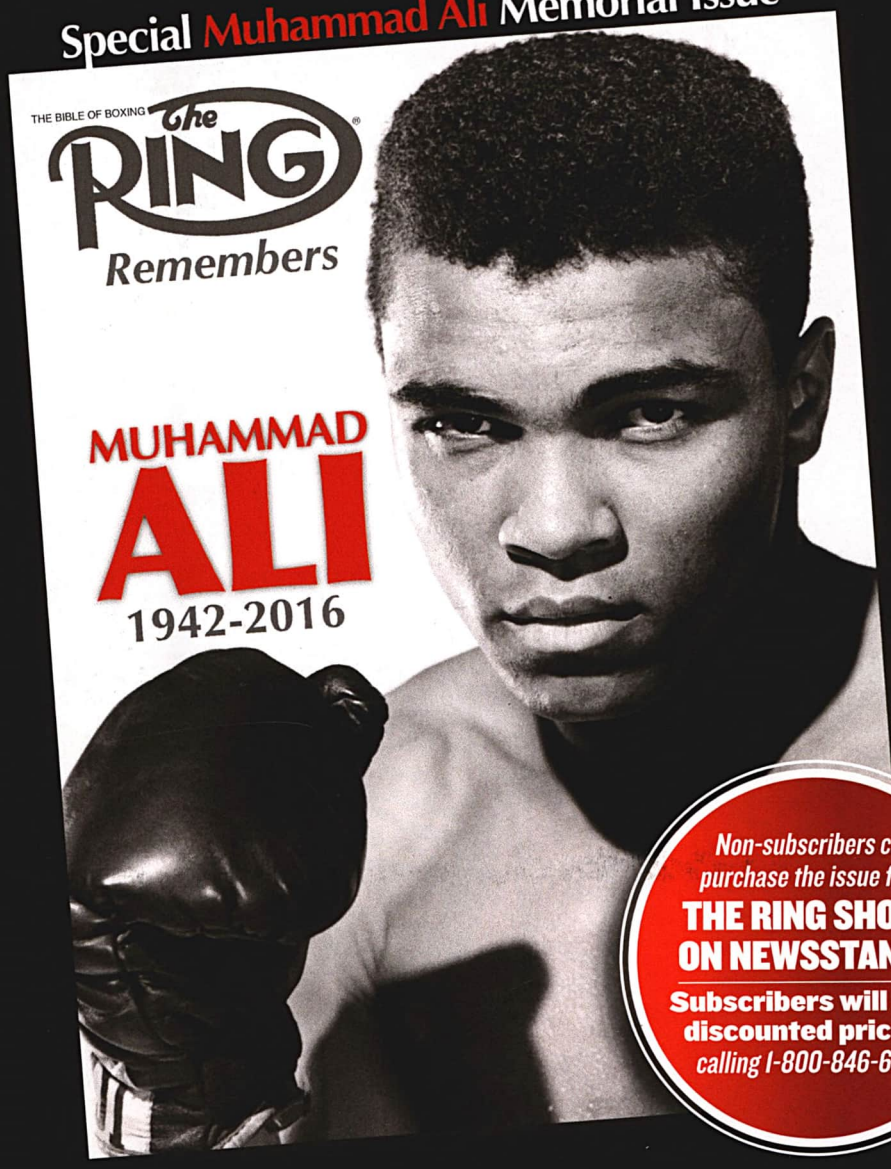

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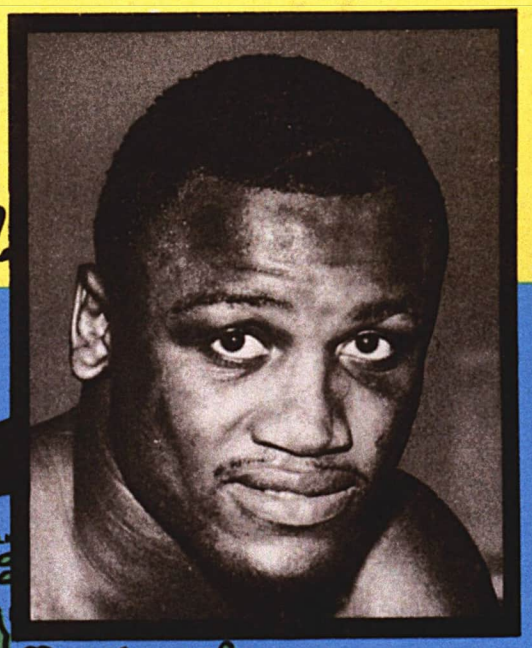

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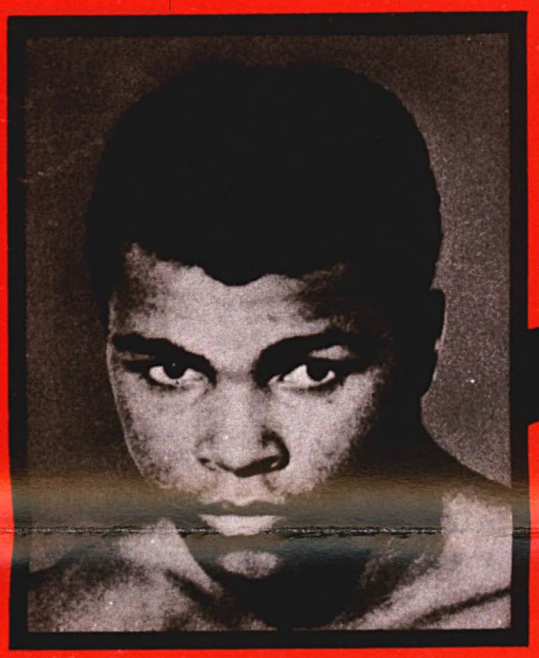

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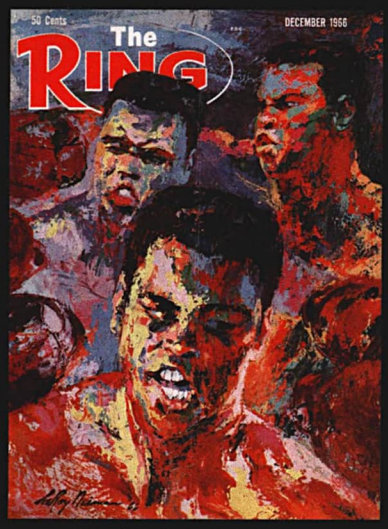

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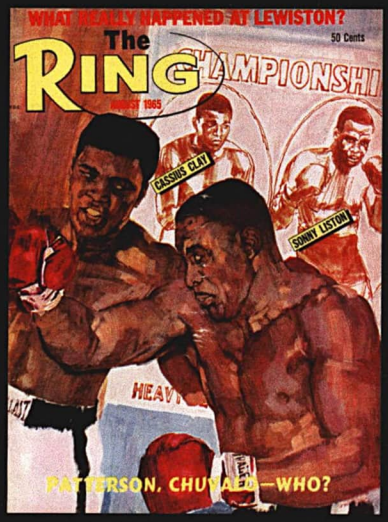

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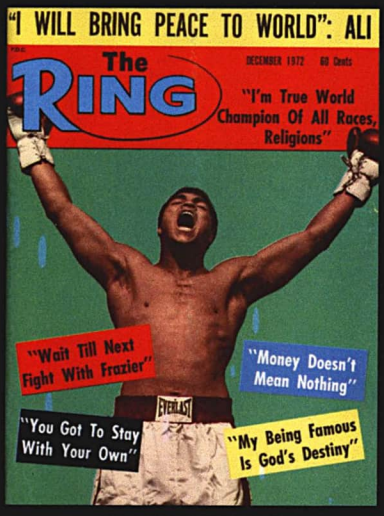

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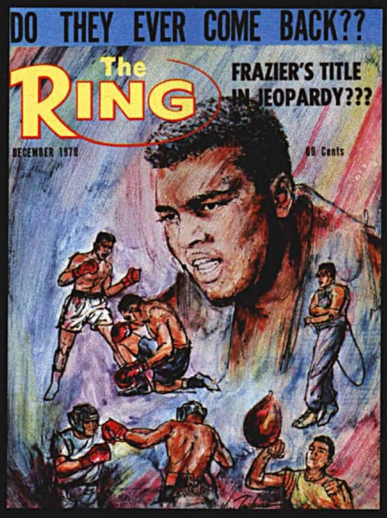

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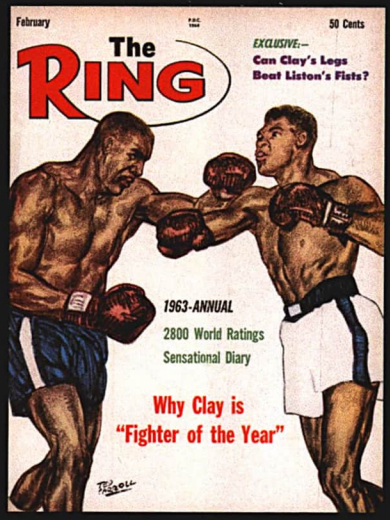

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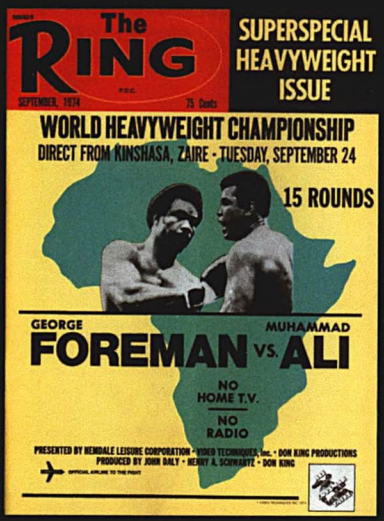

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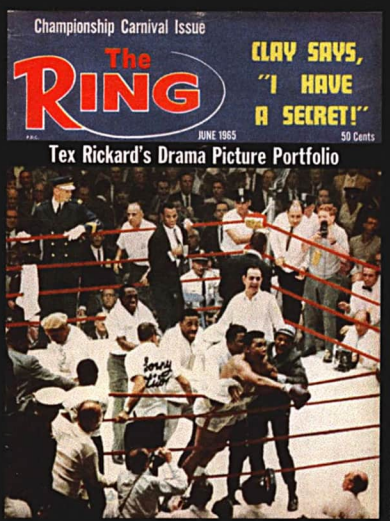

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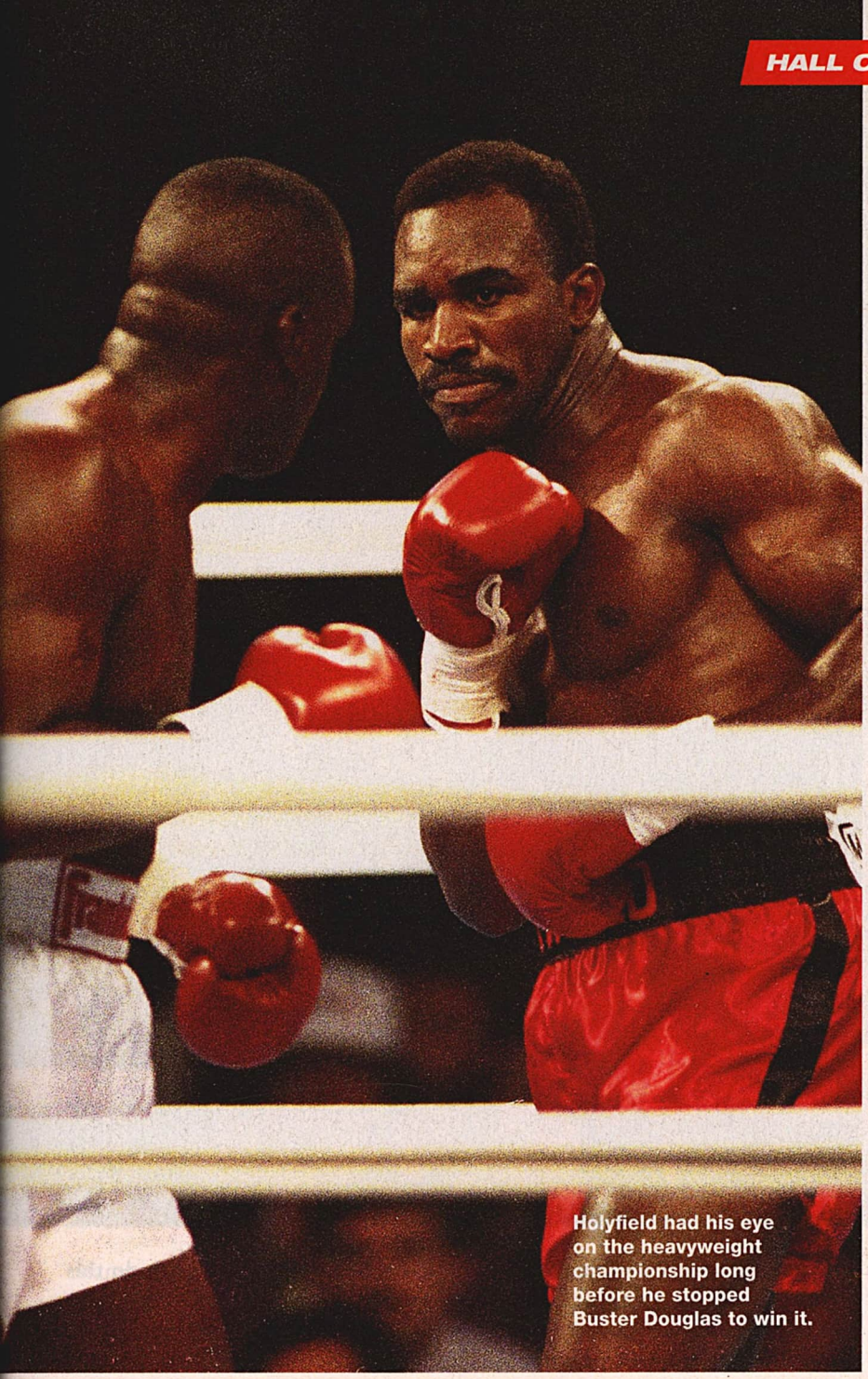


Holyfield had his eye on the heavyweight championship long before he stopped Buster Douglas to win it.

a battery of tests at the Mayo Clinic. He passed them all without complaint, but after a win over Ray Mercer he was stopped for the first time in his career by Bowe in the rubber match of their classic trilogy. It dropped Holyfield's record to 31-3 and seemingly sent him into the shadows.

By this time, Tyson was back, but at 34 Holyfield seemed on his way out to many experts. After stopping former light heavyweight and cruiserweight titleholder Bobby Czyz in his next fight but looking lackluster to some while doing it, Holyfield agreed to take $4 million less than his advisers said he was worth to finally get Tyson in the ring on November 9, 1996.

"I'll get it all back in the rematch after I win," Holyfield told a friend.

The boxing world did not share his faith in himself. He was installed as a 25-1 underdog to the WBA titleholder and few gave him even a puncher's chance of victory. In fact, many feared for his well-being.

One day about a month before the fight, Holyfield was sitting with a friend in his condo in Houston, not far from the Hard Knocks gym where he trained. Considering all that had happened to him in life, it was a fitting location to prepare for what others thought might be a fistic funeral.

The television was on that day and the image of Tyson's brash managers, John Horne and Rory Holloway, flashed across the screen. Both were making disparaging remarks about Holyfield and threatening ones about what Tyson would do to him.

Holyfield stopped eating, looked at the TV for a moment and then went back to his plate. Asked what he thought about what he'd heard, he said, "What's the sense trying to intimidate someone who won't be intimidated? We still got to fight."

When they did, Evander Holyfield beat Mike Tyson's behind. There is no other way to put it.

He staggered him in the second round, cut him above his left eye and then dropped him in the sixth with a left hand to the chest, and badly hurt him near the end of the 10th round, one in which Holyfield landed 23 punches, nearly all of them to Tyson's head.

The 11th round was merely a formality. Tyson was already swaying when he came out of his corner, his gloves submissively turned inward against his cheeks to protect himself from the assault he knew was coming. But there was no protection.

All the armor of intimidation with which Tyson had beaten so many others had been stripped away. Now he was the one with doubts, although by then even those had been beaten out of him, leaving behind a hollow shell, just as Holyfield expected.

"It will take a special person to beat Tyson," he'd said before the fight. "You need the ability and the heart. You have to want to beat him. A lot of the others who have fought him had the talent but not the heart. Not just anyone will beat him but I don't think Mike is unbeatable. He's human, isn't he?

"As soon as somebody really

Holyfield won only one of three fights against the bigger Riddick Bowe (right) but gave us a series to remember.

decides he wants to be the champion, he can win it. I feel I'm a fighter at heart. I'm out to prove it's not talk in me, it's a fight."

Only 37 seconds after the 11th round began, the fight was over. Holyfield opened a barrage of punches with a stiff right hand that sent Tyson reeling helplessly into the ropes. With Tyson's body half turned away to shield himself from the blows, referee Mitch Halpern stepped in.

That night Holyfield made only $12 million to Tyson's $30 million but, as he'd promised, he got it all back in the rematch and then some. He earned $34 million seven months later in the infamous "Bite Fight," when a frustrated and bleeding Tyson lost his mind and bit both of Holyfield's ears before being disqualified in the third round.

That was the escape route Tyson chose but the fight was over before it began. When the two engaged in the usual pre-fight staredown as referee Mills Lane gave instructions, Holyfield wore the look of a ferocious lion, hungry for battle, staring a hole through Tyson. Tyson looked away. Barely a minute later, Holyfield rocked him with a right hook, and when Tyson landed his own shots Holyfield was unmoved.

Convinced Holyfield was butting him even though it was he who often led with his head, Tyson lost all self-control while Holyfield remained composed, even as blood leaked down the sides of his face. He did not retaliate, although he later said had the fight gone on it was headed to a dark place Tyson didn't want to be. Those two fights would be the apex of Holyfield's career. Although it would go on for 14 more years and 20 more fights, including two with Lewis – a disputed draw and a clear, but close decision for the great British champion in a rematch – as well as a fourth time as a heavyweight titleholder when he won the WBA belt from John Ruiz two months shy of his 38th birthday, so many battles had taken their toll on him.

Still among the best in the world, he was no longer *the* best. He was still "The Real Deal," as he had long been called. But now a tough journeymen like Ruiz or a skillful, elusive boxer like Chris Byrd proved too much for him.

After a trilogy of stylistically ugly matches with Ruiz that led to a 1-1-1 split and Holyfield's final loss of the title, he would lose three straight to Byrd, James Toney and Larry Donald, temporarily being suspended by the New York Commission for possessing "diminishing skills." The commission in fact said he'd been "non-competitive" against Donald. Evander Holyfield was many things in boxing but non-competitive was never one of them.

"If no one believes I can do this at 44, so what?" Holyfield told a friend. "They didn't believe I could do it at 24, either. It doesn't matter if anybody else believes in me. Criticism is nothing new for me. I am who I am because I stuck with what the word of God says, not what people say. I don't waver, even with the things I don't do well. So why should I waver in boxing? Boxing is what I do well."

He overcame all that through the force of will that had allowed him to ignore so many doubters throughout his career and put himself back into the title picture at 44, only to lose a unanimous decision for the WBO title to Sultan Ibragimov in Russia and a hotly disputed majority one to WBA champion Nikolay Valuev 16 months later.

"I should be the oldest heavyweight champion in history," Holyfield said with a laugh. "I beat that guy (Valuev). They just didn't give it to me."

After losing much of his fortune and eventually his mansion outside Atlanta because of poor business dealings, three divorces and a brood of 11 children, his next three fights were more about the need for money than any progress toward a final title shot. Yet, at nearly 50, Holyfield insisted he was still competitive and willing to face Wladimir Klitschko, who by then ruled the heavyweight division.

Klitschko made it clear that would never happen, so in 2014 Holyfield finally officially retired at 51 having not fought in three years. In the end his record was 44-10-2 (29 knockouts), but those numbers are deceiving. He was 8-7-1 with a no-contest in his final 16 fights, all coming after the age of 37. Prior to that he was 36-3-1 against the biggest and best fighters in what may have been the last great heavyweight era. When all is said and done, Evander Holyfield was arguably the greatest fighter of his time and one of the best heavyweights of all time. The 65-pound kid trying to find a way into the fenced-off, secret world had done more than anyone ever thought possible.

Despite all he did as a heavyweight, however, it is that first meeting with Qawi that he remembers most. That was a test so withering it made him wonder whether boxing really was a trade he wanted to master.

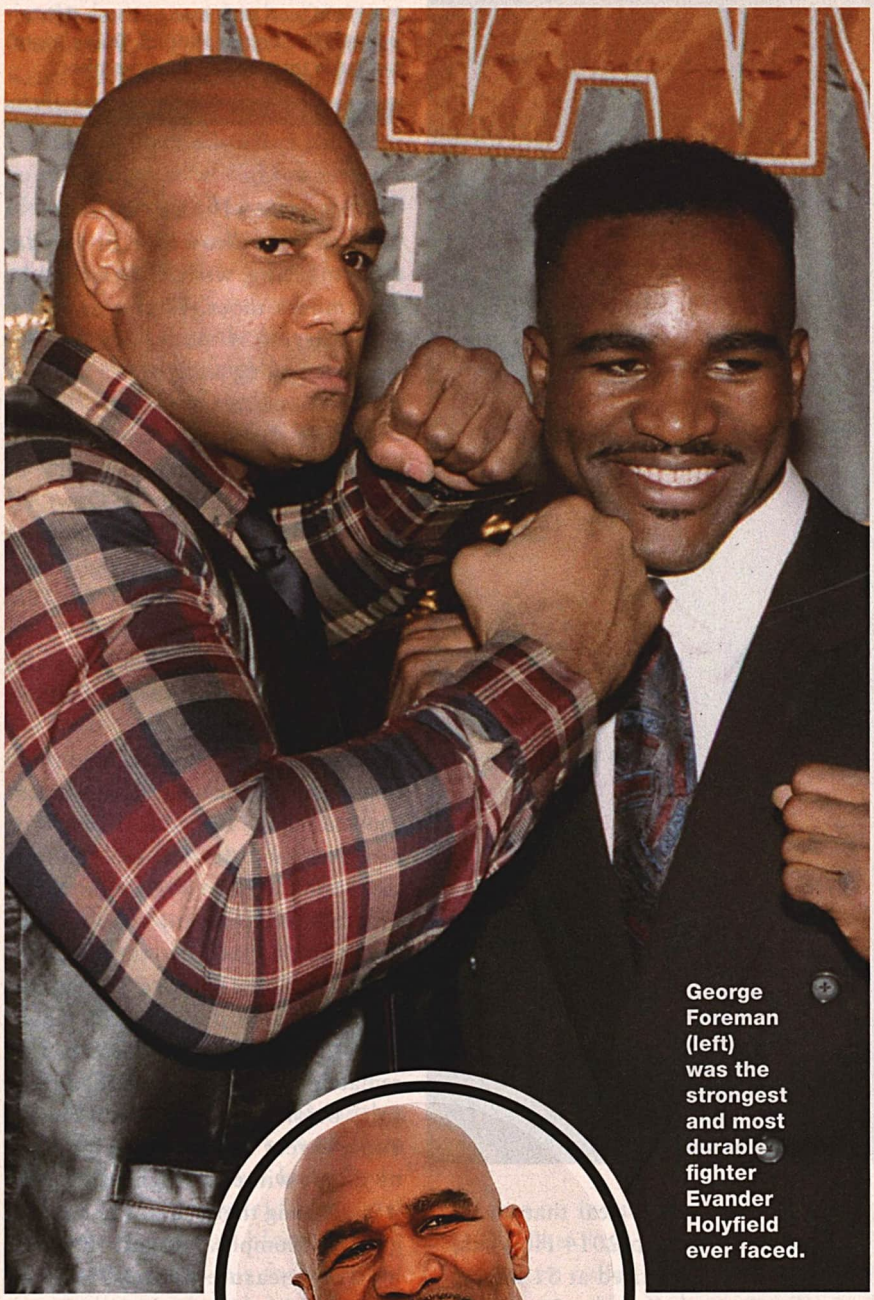
"People always ask, 'Evander, what was the toughest fight you had?'" he said. "Dwight Muhammad Qawi. He would not STOP! I'd hit him with six shots and he'd come right back with six shots. It was only my 12th fight and people were saying I'd never go 15 rounds. By the end that's all I wanted to do. I just wanted to make it to the end.

"I wasn't sure I ever wanted to do that again. My manager, Ken Sanders, showed me the belts. I told him, 'You can have the belts. I'm too young to die. I don't want to box no more.' But I made it. That was my whole thing. I didn't quit. I made it to the end."

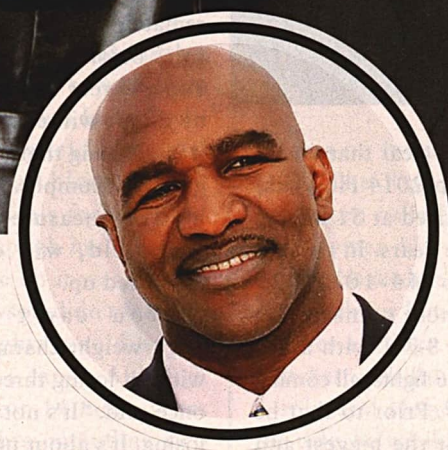
He did much more than that. He won a split decision in a classic brawl, later beat Qawi easily in a rematch and eventually unified those titles before embarking on a Hall of Fame career as a heavyweight. But he didn't win every fight, and often it is in losing that a man can have his greatest triumphs. For only then does he truly measure himself. Evander Holyfield, win or lose, always measured up.

"You can't be four-time heavyweight champion of the world without losing three times," Holyfield once said. "It's not about winning or losing. It's about not quitting."

One can debate exactly where he fits on the list of boxing's greatest warriors but no one would ever argue Evander Holyfield quit. He just finally retired, still believing he could win the title one more time but "I can't make nobody fight." Perhaps not, but it wasn't for lack of trying.



George Foreman (left) was the strongest and most durable fighter Evander Holyfield ever faced.



EVANDER HOLYFIELD

44-10-2 (29 KOs)

Evander Holyfield is arguably the greatest fighter since the heyday of Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran.

Consider his accomplishments: He won an Olympic bronze medal (after a controversial disqualification in the semifinals), is the greatest cruiserweight in the division's nearly four-decade history and is a four-time heavyweight titleholder even though he was undersized. On top of that, he had a warrior mentality that endeared him to millions of fans worldwide.

That's a legacy that is hard to match, which is why he was a no-brainer when it came time for first-ballot induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Holyfield was introduced to the world during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, when his dreams of winning a gold medal were dashed the moment he knocked out Kevin Barry with a left hook a split second after referee Gligorije Novicic yelled "stop!" He was DQ'd, leaving him out of the final.

The unfortunate loser was devastated but still relishes his Olympic experience.

"We did that for free. We were doing it for the country," said Holyfield, who finished his amateur career with a record of 160-14. "That's what the Olympics were; they meant more. It gave us an opportunity to show how great our country is."

Holyfield made his pro debut later that year and went on to become the first member of the '84 team to win a pro title. In just his 12th fight, he edged the tough, tenacious and more seasoned Dwight Muhammad Qawi over 15 brutal rounds to win the WBA cruiserweight belt.

Holyfield went on to add the IBF and WBC titles before moving up to heavyweight in the summer of '88 and building toward a

championship fight. The next 20-plus years would see an epic series of ups and downs. They included:

His third-round knockout of Mike Tyson-conqueror Buster Douglas to become undisputed heavyweight champion; his three-fight series with the talented and much bigger Riddick Bowe, whom he beat once in three memorable fights; his surprising loss to Michael Moorer, which he later avenged; his later series with Lennox Lewis and John Ruiz, against whom he became champ for an unprecedented fourth time; and, most notably, his historic two fights with the biggest prize in boxing, Tyson.

"There was no intimidation," Holyfield said of the first Tyson fight, in November 1996. "With me, I just realized I wasn't going to get beat by a reputation. My mom said, 'To be a champion, you have to beat the champion. Don't let a reputation beat you.'"

Holyfield was as much as a 25-1 underdog after a knockout loss to Bowe and a shaky performance against Bobby Czyz, yet he stunned the boxing world by stopping Tyson in 11 fascinating rounds to win the WBA title. The infamous rematch took place the following June, when Tyson was disqualified for gnawing off a portion of Holyfield's ear.

That title reign ended when Holyfield lost to Lewis in November 1999. He won one last belt with his victory over Ruiz and almost won a fifth title against giant Nikolay Valuev in 2008 before fighting for the last time 2011.

He couldn't have accomplished much more.

"I made sure I fought everyone that I thought was going to be anything. I fought 'em all," he said.

BEST JAB

Riddick Bowe: I would say Riddick Bowe and Lennox Lewis, they are the only two guys who could keep me off with the jab. I would say Bowe; he was consistent with it. Lennox kind of had it but Bowe used it for offense and defense, and at any given time he'd use the left hand. Oh yeah, it was powerful. Larry (Holmes) had one of the best jabs in the world but he didn't use it on me.

BEST DEFENSE

Dwight Muhammad Qawi: He had a good defense. He'd get you before you get back home. He was short and had long arms. He had the wrong arms – he had monkey arms! Very good defense.

FASTEST HANDS

Michael Dokes: I can tell you the people who had good hand speed – Michael Dokes would be the first one. I hit him with six and he'd hit me with six. (Laughs.) He could have his hands down and throw punches from different directions and get you before you were able to get your hands up. He was quick and he had punching power as well. I would say Bowe, too; he would reach out and get you.

FASTEST FEET

Chris Byrd: The people that I fought ... nobody ran because I was a smaller guy. Let's give it to Chris Byrd; he got around and that's how he won.

BEST CHIN

George Foreman: I would say George Foreman. I hit him and I hit him a lot of times, a lot of times (Laughs.) ... 17 punches one time! Lennox Lewis had a great chin. I went back and watched the fights and the people who knocked him out [did so] because he had a different mindset for them. He didn't fight smart with them 'cause he felt he could beat them. Everybody he pursued and thought that he could beat, they ended up knocking him out – that's Oliver McCall and Hasim Rahman. I came to respect him 'cause I know in the last fight I buckled him a few times but he didn't go. Mike Tyson had a good one, too; he didn't fall when I hit him.

SMARTEST

Lennox Lewis: Lennox Lewis was that guy; he fought like a big man, he fought his style regardless. Whether people boo or not, he was gonna fight his way. I realized he was going to fight the perfect fight. He was a smart fighter, he stuck to the game plan.

STRONGEST

Foreman: Out of all the people, I would say George Foreman was the strongest. And behind him Lennox Lewis and Riddick Bowe. I could push anybody back, it wasn't a problem. I couldn't push George back. (Laughs.) You had to go around him.

BEST PUNCHER

Foreman: George Foreman hit the hardest.

BOXING SKILLS

Michael Moorer: I think at the time I fought them, Michael Moorer and Riddick Bowe. What separated them was Bowe was aggressive, very aggressive. Michael Moorer, he was smart. He was going to hit you a lot because he didn't punch as hard as Bowe, but he was precise. He had that snap; he'd knock a lot of people out because he had that snap. Sometimes if Bowe missed, he'd be off balance. Michael was still there.

BEST OVERALL

Bowe: I would say Bowe. I had three fights with Bowe. He was very competitive, he was always going to be in shape when he fought me. Then ... I would say Qawi.

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright

HALL OF FAME 2017

THE UNLIKELY ICON

WRITING OFF THE RESILIENT **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** WAS NEVER A GOOD IDEA

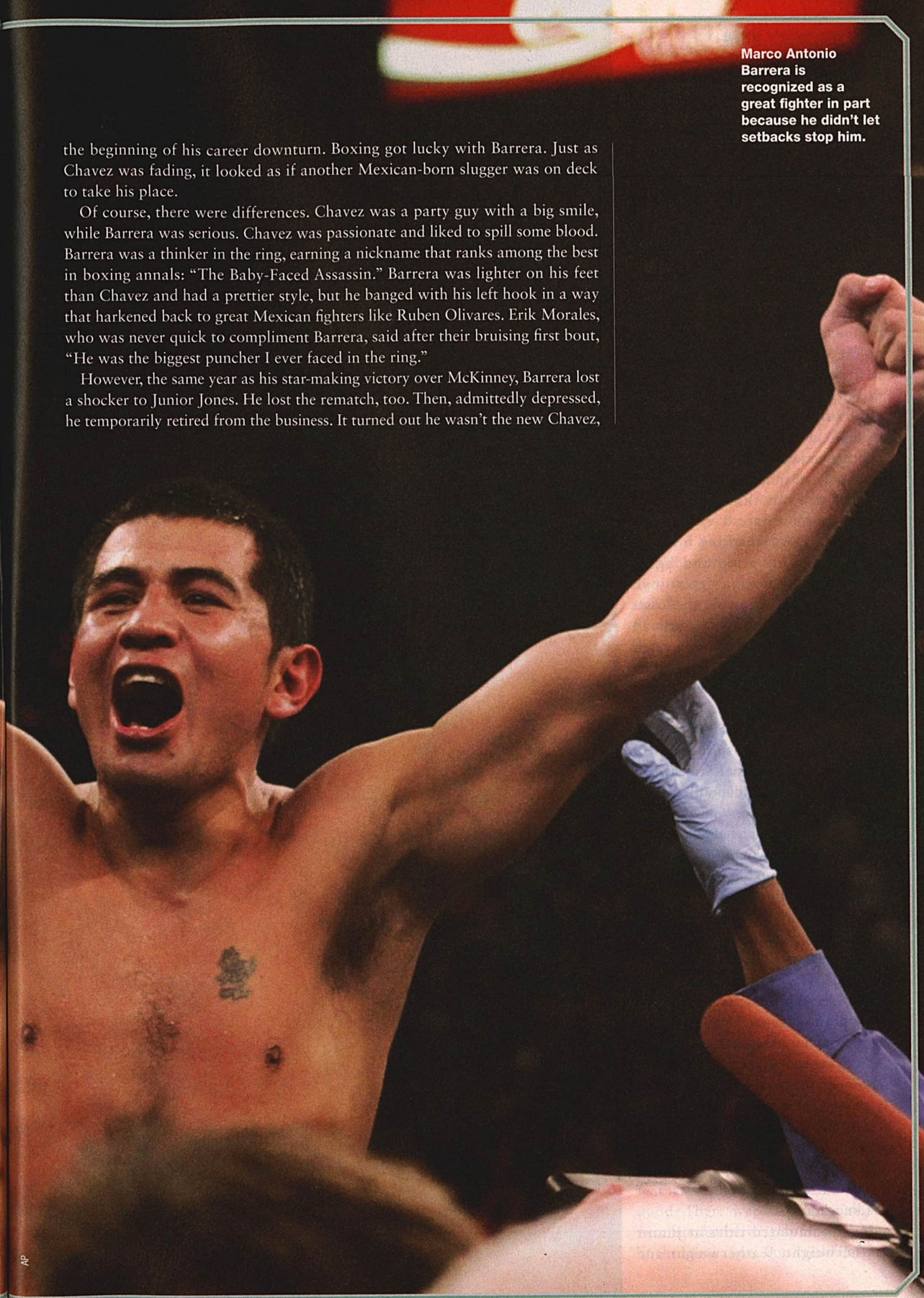
By **Don Stradley**

Marco Antonio Barrera is proof that you can fall short of initial expectations, lose a bunch of fights and change your style to one that is actually less fan-friendly than the one that made you a star in the first place, yet still find yourself inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Granted, we wouldn't advise other fighters to follow the same route, but in Barrera's case it worked out.

Barrera fought his way into the spotlight when all of Mexico was awaiting their next hero. The reigning icon, Julio Cesar Chavez, was still going strong in 1989 when Barrera, a 15-year-old flyweight from Mexico City – fighting with falsified papers because he was too young to box for pay – earned his first professional victory, a two-round TKO over another novice named David Felix. By 1996, when Barrera scored his 40th victory by stopping Kennedy McKinney in an unforgettable fight on a new HBO show called "Boxing After Dark," Chavez was at the beginning of his career downturn. Boxing got lucky with Barrera. Just as Chavez was fading, it looked as if another Mexican-born slugger was on deck to take his place.

Of course, there were differences. Chavez was a party guy with a big smile, while Barrera was serious. Chavez was passionate and liked to spill some blood. Barrera was a thinker in the ring, earning a nickname that ranks among the best in boxing annals: "The Baby-Faced Assassin." Barrera was lighter on his feet than Chavez and had a prettier style, but he banged with his left hook in a way that harkened back to great Mexican fighters like Ruben Olivares. Erik Morales, who was never quick to compliment Barrera, said after their bruising first bout, "He was the biggest puncher I ever faced in the ring."

However, the same year as his star-making victory over McKinney, Barrera lost a shocker to Junior Jones. He lost the rematch, too. Then, admittedly depressed, he temporarily retired from the business. It turned out he wasn't the new Chavez,



AP

Marco Antonio Barrera is recognized as a great fighter in part because he didn't let setbacks stop him.

after all. It took the boxing world a while to figure out exactly where Barrera fit in the scheme of things.

"Calling him the next Chavez was a bit unfair, I think," said former HBO Boxing commentator Larry Merchant, who was on the broadcast of many Barrera bouts. "He looked like the successor to Chavez, the next in line to win the hearts and minds of the Mexican fans, but Barrera lost some fights, so there went the distinction. Chavez appeared imperially unbeatable, and was such a pure representation of the Mexican fighting heritage that to compare any young fighter to him is unfair."

It turned out that losing some fights made Barrera even more fascinating, as watching him rise from the ashes time and again became one of boxing's great joys. Many dismissed him after the losses to Jones, but he returned to win 14 of his next 16, transforming himself into a boxer instead of a brawler, leaving the ugliness of the trenches to snipe from the hills. The change in Barrera, and his ability to still brawl if necessary, inspired Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward to call him "the most adaptable fighter in modern times."

Barrera was dismissed again after Manny Pacquiao whipped him in 2003 at the Alamodome in Houston. We should've known better, for he'd notch another six victories, as well as THE RING's Comeback of the Year award in 2004, plus a 2½-year term as WBC junior lightweight titleholder. When it was learned that an operation to alleviate headaches had left him with a small metal plate in his forehead, it was suggested that he retire. He didn't; he kept winning. Even when he was past his prime and lost by technical decision to a younger and naturally bigger Amir Khan, he still came back and won two more bouts. Barrera's final tally was 67-7 (44 knockouts).

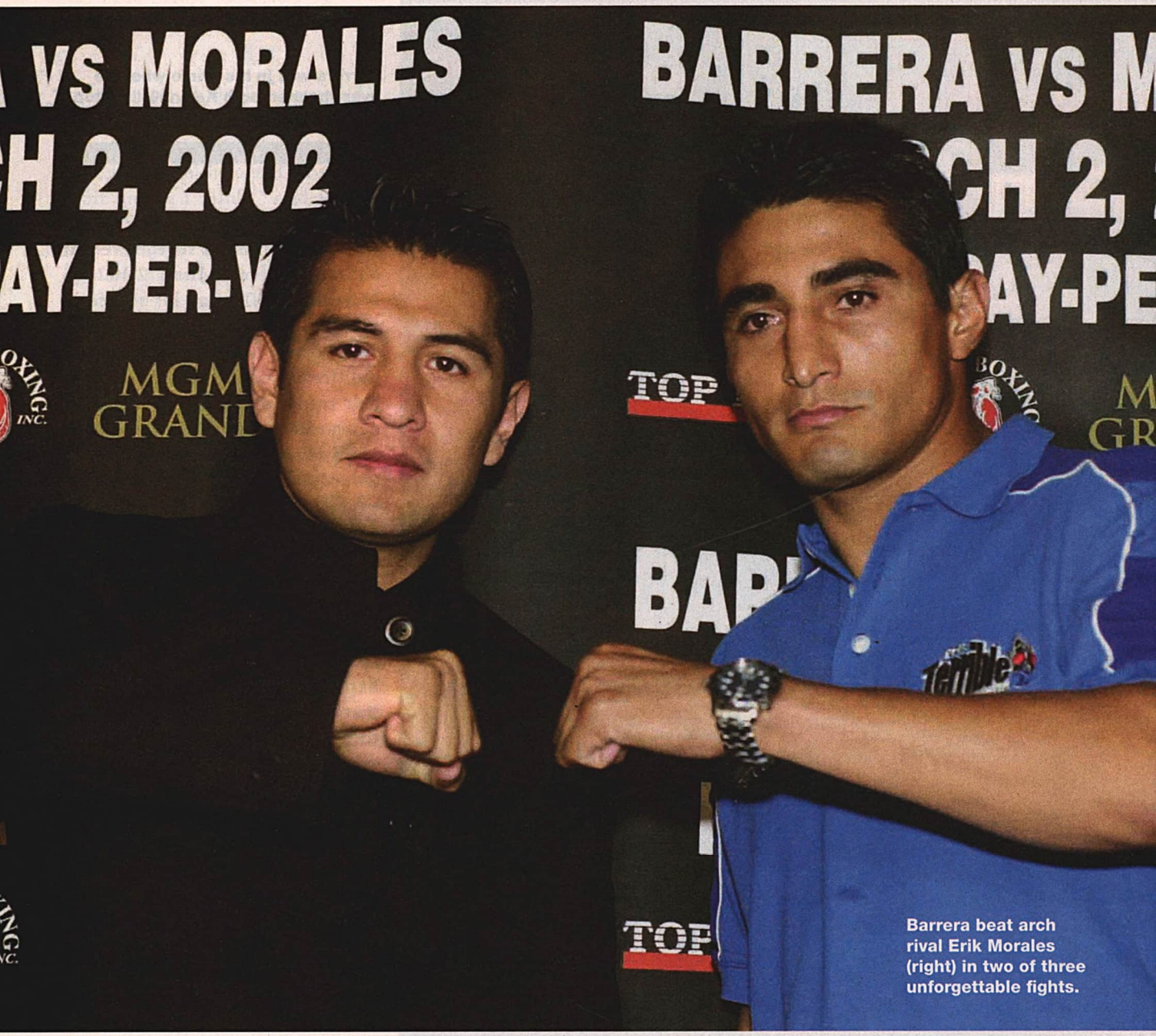
He accumulated titles at junior featherweight, featherweight and

Barrera was in his prime when he overwhelmed both Kevin Kelley (top photo) and Naseem Hamed.

junior lightweight. THE RING recognized him as featherweight champion from June 2002 to November 2003, and his record in title bouts was 23-5 (14 knockouts). Still, Barrera sometimes gave off an indifferent vibe to the whole title-belt rigmarole. And so it is with our memories of Barrera; we don't really associate him with belts or title defenses. We remember his excellence in the ring. And we remember him as a key part of an era, perhaps the most important era in recent boxing history.

"When the tectonic plates of boxing shifted from New York to the West Coast and to Mexico, Barrera was part of a major change that overtook the sport," Merchant told THE RING. "Think of the great smaller fighters at the time; the majority were Mexican, or Mexican-American. This was part of, if not the start of the globalization of boxing. American fans that had previously shown no interest in fighters who were not American were suddenly watching and enjoying fighters like Barrera, and Morales, and Ricardo Lopez, and (Juan Manuel) Marquez and others on a very long list. The smaller fighters replaced the heavyweights. There was something sincere about them. It was prizefighting the way it was supposed to be, with the fighters leaving it all in the ring. These were spirited kids with good stories, interesting pasts and great styles. And HBO was paying big bucks for these fights, not like Tyson money, but for the smaller fighters, it was big money.

"It was a golden era, an indelible period. I can't remember the featherweight division ever being so good. There were at least a dozen excellent featherweights all competing at the same time. You couldn't have



Barrera beat arch rival Erik Morales (right) in two of three unforgettable fights.

made it up. Barrera fought, and beat, most of them. There were fighters like Prince (Naseem) Hamed of England: brash, thrilling, an attraction. When Barrera fought Hamed, there was a feeling that Barrera was defending the faith of smaller fighters on both sides of the border."

Barrera turned Hamed inside-out that night in Las Vegas in 2001. As Franz Lidz of Sports Illustrated put it, Barrera "conducted a masterly boxing clinic that left the Englishman looking as off-balance as a one-legged man in an arse-kicking contest."

Barrera capped his performance in the final round by shoving Hamed headfirst into the padded turnbuckle. Barrera could be as dirty as anybody, and had a temper to boot. Remember, he actually slugged McKinney at a press conference, and there were times he and Morales couldn't be within 10 feet of each other without some pushing and shoving. In fact, one of the best punches of his career was thrown in his second bout with Pacquiao when referee Tony Weeks stepped in to separate the fighters. Seeing the opportunity, Barrera hit Pacquiao on the break and nearly dropped him. Barrera had a point deducted and lost a rather lopsided decision, but he sent Pacquiao back to the Philippines with something to remember him by. Granted, the punch probably came from Barrera's frustration at not being able to solve Pacquiao's style, but such antics didn't keep his admirers from praising him as a gentleman.

"He was one of the only fighters I remember who wore a suit and tie to our fighter meetings," said Merchant. "And he would be alone. He didn't need an echo chamber of managers or an entourage. He was a man of substance, as well as a fighter of

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA'S GREATEST HITS

The five most important victories in Barrera's career.

KENNEDY MCKINNEY

Date: Feb. 3, 1996 • **Site:** Great Western Forum, Inglewood, Calif. • **Result:** TKO 12 • **Background:** Barrera, making the fifth defense of his WBO 122-pound title, dropped McKinney five times. Still, this was no blowout. McKinney fought hard and even put Barrera on the canvas in Round 11. The barrage that ended it at 2:05 of the 12th showed Barrera at his most ferocious; he practically sneered as he pounded McKinney into submission.

ERIK MORALES I

Date: Feb. 19, 2000 • **Site:** Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Las Vegas • **Result:** L SD 12 • **Background:** Wearing the WBO junior featherweight crown a second time, Barrera faced WBC kingpin Morales in this highly anticipated contest. The resulting fight was good enough for HBO's Jim Lampley to bellow before the final round, "It's been an unforgettable war!" Though Barrera lost, his star rose in the RING Fight of the Year.

NASEEM HAMED

Date: April 7, 2001 • **Site:** MGM Grand, Las Vegas • **Result:** UD 12 • **Background:** Hamed was the undefeated hotshot with the knockout punch, while Barrera was a 3-1 underdog. Ignoring the naysayers, Barrera avoided heavy exchanges and put on a display of pure boxing. "The key to that victory was to not be intimidated by any of his antics," Barrera said later. "On the contrary, to not show any respect to him." He didn't.

JOHNNY TAPIA

Date: Nov. 2, 2002 • **Site:** MGM Grand, Las Vegas • **Result:** UD 12 • **Background:** The always entertaining Tapia was an aging warhorse by the time of this bout, but he gave a very good account of himself. Meanwhile, Barrera boxed brilliantly, winning by scores of 116-112, 118-110 and 118-110. The fight was much closer than the cards reflected. Tapia said it was an honor to fight Barrera, calling him, "the true king of the featherweights."

ERIK MORALES III

Date: Nov. 27, 2004 • **Site:** MGM Grand, Las Vegas • **Result:** MD 12 • **Background:** The rubber match wasn't expected to be so intense, but it was named THE RING's Fight of the Year, with Round 11 taking Round of the Year honors. The two old rivals tore into each other just as they had more than four years earlier. One judge called it a draw; the other two scored narrowly for Barrera. It was a thriller.

substance." HBO's Jim Lampley was an unabashed Barrera admirer; some clever fellow could make a funny video loop of Lampley describing Barrera as "among the classiest fighters I've met." He said this nearly every time Barrera fought on HBO, until it sounded as if Lampley was talking about some suave character on a Dos Equis commercial.

Barrera was certainly unique among fighters, not only in that he studied law at La Salle University in Mexico City, but also in that he didn't come from the sort of crawling poverty that spawns most boxing champions. Indeed, his father worked in the Mexican film industry. Two uncles brought Barrera to a boxing gym when he was 7, and he liked the nervous feeling he got when trying on a pair of gloves. As he progressed through the amateur ranks, his family members would jog with him in the early morning hours to keep him company. It was perhaps this warm, well-off background that irritated his archrival, Morales, who came from the decidedly meaner streets of Tijuana.

Three times they fought, and though Barrera has two official wins, many still argue about the verdicts, especially of the first two bouts. What no one argues about is that the Barrera-Morales trilogy was one of the fiercest in boxing history and that the acrimony on the part of Morales was very real and deep.

"The first fight with Morales was a hard, thrilling fight," said Merchant. "I don't remember a more intense fight. There was a social and psychological battle going on between them that fascinated me. It was a personal rivalry, with personal things at stake. I recall Morales, in particular, saying, 'He's not in my class,' which can have many different meanings."

Morales may have been piqued that Barrera had found his early stardom in Los Angeles, not Mexico. Perhaps it was merely a geographic rivalry of Mexico City vs. Tijuana. Or maybe he resented Barrera's style, which combined power with finesse, whereas Morales always looked like he was attacking opponents with a hatchet.

Or maybe, most likely, he resented Barrera's very existence. After the fans and the press had given up on Barrera being the new Chavez, Morales was thought to be the heir apparent. When the two collided in the ring, they seemed to be fighting for the championship of Chavez, or as Dr. Ferdie Pacheco once said of the Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier wars, they were fighting for the championship of each other.

"There is always respect between fighters but things are always the same between us," Barrera said in 2012. "He just doesn't like me."

Barrera wasn't innocent, though. He matched Morales' barbs and nasty behavior with his own. Moreover, both fighters would be chastised in today's more delicate climate. These days, ESPN would devote a half hour of SportsCenter to whether the two should be fined or punished for some of the things they said about each other. Times have certainly changed. Fifteen years ago, anyone trying to persuade Morales and Barrera to be more politically sensitive would have had better luck catching a bull with a butterfly net.

With Barrera and Morales it may have been a simple case of, as they used to say in movies about the Old West, the town wasn't big enough for both of them. Here's hoping the IBHOF will be big enough, as Barrera will be inducted in June 2017 and Morales is a lock to join him there soon.

As for being the next Chavez, it's an old line that doesn't mean much anymore. Sportswriters looking for a headline brought it up and fans found the idea tasty. If the comparison bothered Barrera, he didn't let on.

"It was a high bar to jump," said Merchant, "but Barrera did pretty damned good."

HALL OF FAME 2017

THE GOLD STANDARD

JIMMY LENNON SR. WAS AN INSTITUTION LONG BEFORE HIS FAMOUS SON PICKED UP A MIC

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Those who grew up listening to Jimmy Lennon Sr. know exactly where his son got his golden voice and graceful style. The elder Lennon was the gold standard, if you will.

Lennon Sr. worked nationwide but was known primarily as the ring announcer at the old Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles and other venues in the area for decades after World War II, his clear, commanding voice recognizable to all boxing and wrestling fans of his era.

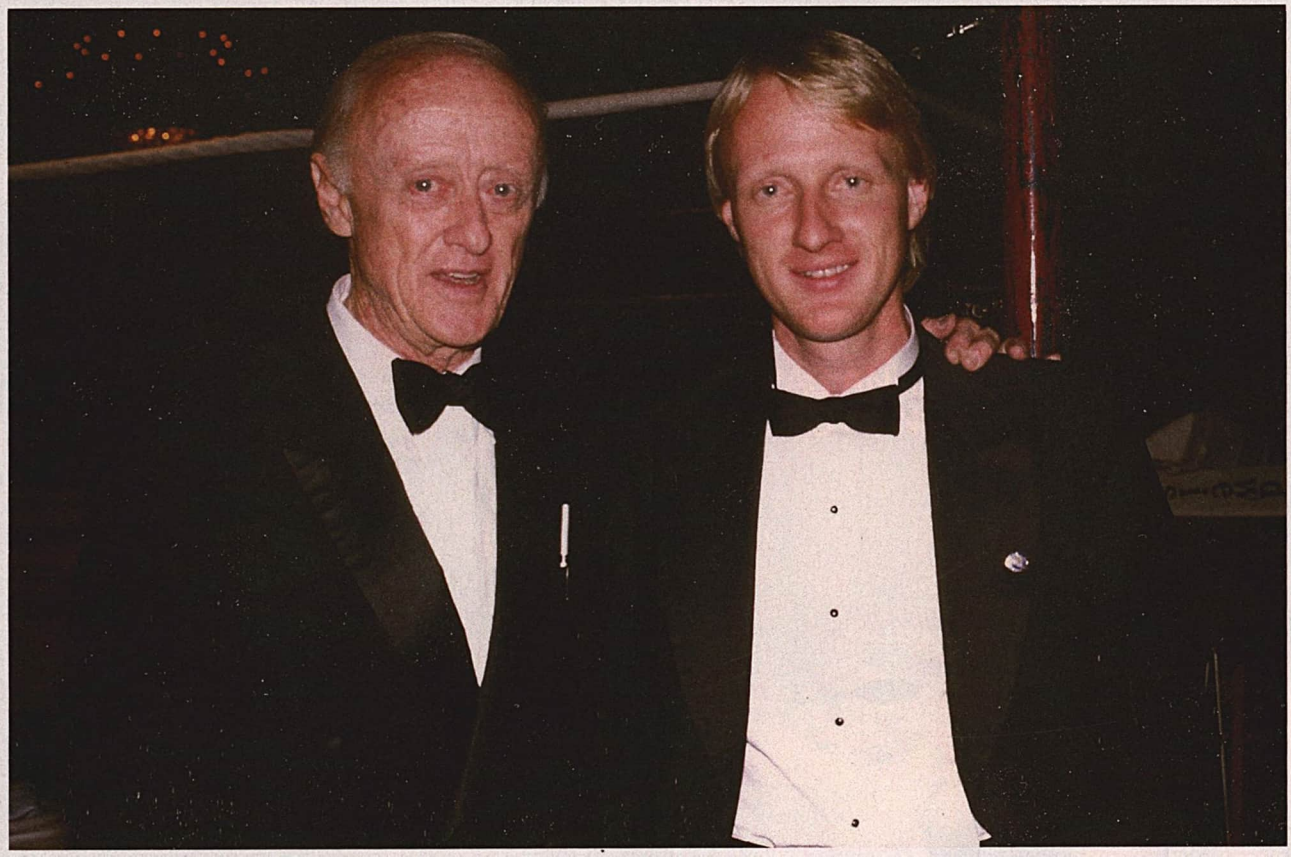
He had a smooth, elegant style that reverberates through his son today. That includes his wardrobe: He wore a tuxedo every time he went to work, which is now standard in the business.

And he was a stickler for details, a prime example being his painstaking effort to pronounce tongue-twisting names correctly. "A man is entitled to the dignity of his own name," he once told the Los Angeles Times.

The Times provided a wonderful anecdote in Lennon's obituary (he died in 1992). The late Earl Gustkey wrote:

"Once, Lennon was hired to emcee a Greek-American awards banquet in Los Angeles. He gulped as he looked at the name on a trophy he was to present: Anastasios Honchopathadurkomontorogiotopolous. 'There was only one way to do it,' Lennon recalled years later. 'I broke

Jimmy Lennon Sr. will join his son, Jimmy Jr., in the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June.



Ring announcer Jimmy Lennon Jr.'s role model was close at hand.

it down into syllables and then put it back together again.'

"He did, flawlessly. The man came to the podium, kissed Lennon on the cheek and told him: 'You are the only person to pronounce my name correctly since I come to America.'"

Lennon learned to work hard out of necessity. He was 17, as the Great Depression was taking hold, when his father died. He had to help provide for the family, which included six brothers and a sister.

He did whatever odd jobs he could find and performed professionally when he could find the work. Having grown up in a musical family, he sang, he acted, he emceed at small venues, whatever it took to make a few bucks.

"He had to hustle all the time," Jimmy Lennon Jr. told THE RING. "I was told about one time he was emceeing an entertainment show, I think at the Elks Club, when someone approached him and said, 'You did a good job tonight. Have you ever announced boxing and wrestling?' He said, 'Yes, I have.' Of course, he hadn't. He just had to hustle for anything he could get. That's how it was."

Lennon Sr. announced his first boxing card at the Santa Monica Elks Club in 1943, after which he became an institution at the Olympic Auditorium and beyond, as well as a model for future announcers.

That includes Lennon Jr., who had no intention of following his famous father into announcing – "I went to UCLA and studied psychology and education," he said – but spent a lot of time at the Olympic and other local venues and eventually gravitated into the business.

Now Lennon Jr. is a boxing fixture, a voice heard worldwide over the past 30-plus years. Junior had begun to announce high-profile fights by the time his father passed away, meaning Lennon Sr. was aware that his son would build upon his legacy.

That, the younger Lennon said, was a source of great pride for his father.

"That means more to me every year," Lennon Jr. said. "I'm a father; I'm proud of my kids. I was told more than once that, 'You could not have given your father a greater gift than to follow him and do a good job.' That made me feel good.

"I knew how important it was to him. I know he was so pleased, so proud the last part of his life."

Lennon Sr. would've been elated when his son was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2013, an honor that also meant a great deal to Lennon Jr. However, it was also awkward: The younger Lennon felt strongly that his father should've entered the Hall before he did.

Thus, the fact Lennon Sr. will be inducted in June has added meaning.

"I don't want to be disrespectful to the Hall of Fame but I feel like this is a wrong that has been righted," Lennon Jr. said. "I believe he deserved this many years ago. I also feel fantastic about it. I think years from now no one will remember when he was inducted. They'll only see that he was recognized for his greatness.

"And I really think he's the greatest ring announcer who ever lived." RING

'I'M LUCKY'

BARRY TOMPKINS HAS HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE OF CALLING MANY SPORTS BUT IS KNOWN AS A 'BOXING GUY'

By **Doug Fischer**

If the 1980s made you a boxing fan, chances are good that Barry Tompkins' voice is part of your memories of those glory years.

If the round robin between Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns and Roberto Duran, or the meteoric rise of Mike Tyson sucked you into the wild world of boxing, you remember these calls:

"And WE have a new era in boxing!" Tompkins declared after Tyson's second-round demolition of Trevor Berbick in 1986.

"How do you like it? How DO you like it!?" Tompkins exclaimed after the final bell of Leonard's upset of Hagler in 1987.

These moments and a four-decade body of work as a blow-by-blow commentator have earned Tompkins a place alongside former HBO broadcast partners Leonard and Larry Merchant in the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Joining Tompkins in the Class of 2017 is current broadcast partner Steve Farhood.

"Barry is not just a boxing commentator, he's a great broadcaster," said Farhood, who has worked alongside Tompkins on Showtime's "ShoBox: The New Generation" series since 2012. "He's called almost every sport known to man. He's seen everything. Nothing rattles him. Boxing throws curve balls, but a nuclear blast could go off and Barry wouldn't miss a beat. He's got a relaxed, conversational style that comes across to viewers but also makes him a pleasure to work with. His partners value how easygoing he is but he also brings energy to the broadcast. I've never heard Barry complain about being tired. I've never seen him yawn!"

Tompkins, a 76-year-old San Francisco native who got his start on local TV in 1968, credits his enthusiasm and longevity to a busy and diverse work schedule. Along with his ShoBox duties he calls Bay Area football and basketball – prep, collegiate and professional – for syndicated cable companies.

"I think doing other sports has kept me around for as long as I've been around," Tompkins said. "I get stale if I stay in the same sport all the time."

He has won acclaim for his football, basketball and tennis commentary, but Tompkins is known as a "boxing guy" thanks to his work on NBC during the 1970s, and on ESPN and FOX in the '90s and 2000s. However, it's his tenure at HBO from 1979 to '88 that longtime fans remember.

"The '80s was a very special time for me. I was new at editing THE RING, and unforgettable fights were taking place," Farhood said. "Barry called Aaron Pryor-Alexis Arguello I. He was the voice of the great fights at that time and I associated him with only the biggest events."

Tompkins downplays his role in those epic fights but admits that there was plenty of action during that decade.

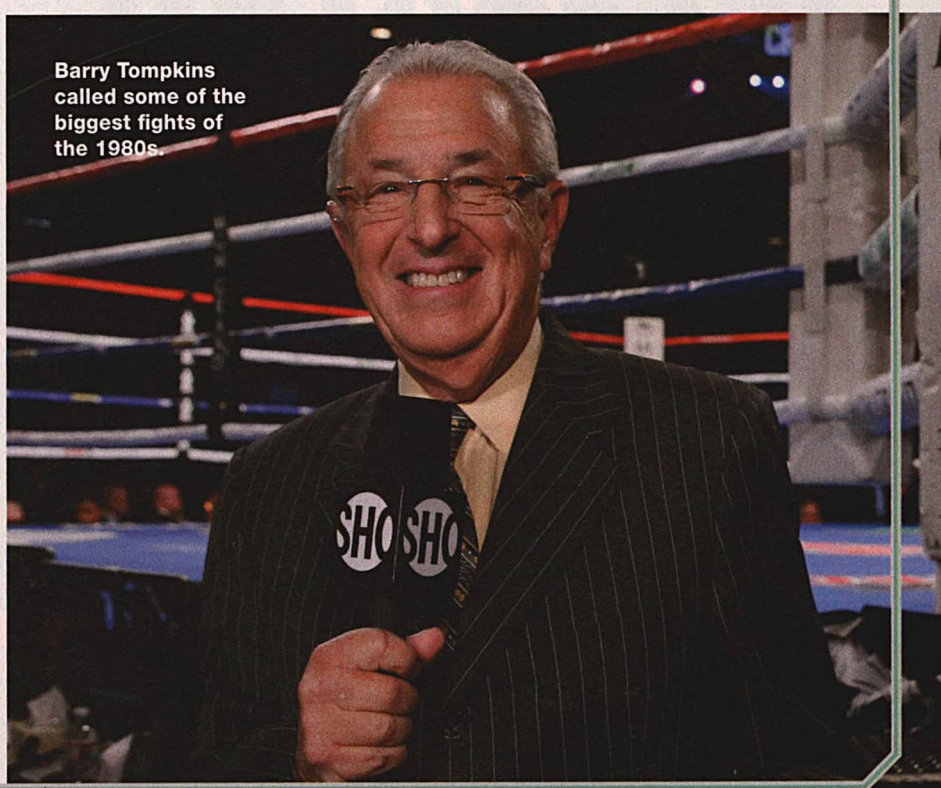
"It's probably more fascinating in retrospect, but it did seem like every week there was a fight worth talking about to people who didn't follow boxing," he said. "It only happens a couple of times a year these days, but it was almost every month in the '80s."

Still, Tompkins is happier now than he was during the glory years.

"I'm lucky," he said. "The ShoBox family is the most fun group I've ever worked with."

ShoBox color commentator Raul Marquez, who considers Tompkins a close friend and broadcast mentor, believes the best is yet to come.

"Barry doesn't act his age," said Marquez, who first met Tompkins while still an amateur boxer. "He's not stuck in the past, he's sharp and up on current things. He's got a lot of years ahead of him." RING



Barry Tompkins called some of the biggest fights of the 1980s.

Eddie Booker was among a gifted group of black fighters you've probably never heard of.

ILL-FATED YET GREAT

EDDIE BOOKER MADE THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITIES HE HAD

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Eddie Booker was among the best of an unfortunate group of gifted fighters.

Black boxers typically were denied the same opportunities as those of other races from the start of the modern era. And never was it more tragic than in the 1930s, '40s and '50s, when as many as 10 championship-caliber black middleweights – called "Murderers' Row" by writer Budd Schulberg – never fought for a world title.

Charlie Burley was the best of the lot but Booker was of the same ilk, a tough, polished boxer-puncher who almost certainly would've won multiple world titles had he been born a generation later.

Booker learned his craft in the San Francisco Bay area in the late '20s and early '30s, turned pro in 1935 (at 17) and wreaked havoc up and down the West Coast until his retirement in 1944.

"Black Dynamite," by all accounts, was a complete fighter, one who could bang or box depending on the situation. And he did both well. He had exceptional defensive skills and a rock-solid chin to go with it. He was never stopped.

The results speak loudly: He finished his career with a record of 66-5-8 (34 knockouts). That included a record of 3-2-3 against fellow Hall of Famers Cocoa Kid, Lloyd Marshall, Archie Moore and Holman Williams.

Booker went 1-0-2 against Moore, one of the greatest fighters in history, and was the first to knock him out. In that 1944 bout, "The Mongoose" went down four times and the fight was stopped by the referee in the eighth round, with Moore unable to continue.

Moore thought a great deal of Booker.

"I've had some rough fights in my time," Moore said, "but all things being equal, when I was in my prime, one of my toughest had to have been against Eddie Booker, a fighting machine ... who shot out punches with deft precision ... [Booker] was one of the great fighters of my time. He had me fighting for dear life."

Booker's career was cut short by a chronic eye injury, making him one of the few fighters to defeat a Hall of Famer (Williams) in his final bout. He was only 26 at the time, which makes us wonder how much more he could've accomplished.

Booker was never allowed to fight for a world title, a fate that had to eat at him and the others. He had to walk away at the height of his abilities, which had to be crushing.

That doesn't detract from his overall body of work, though: Eddie Booker did more than enough against the talented men he faced and in the limited time he had to earn recognition as a great fighter and now as a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

A RESPECTED VOICE

WHETHER WRITING OR BROADCASTING, **STEVE FARHOOD** HAS COMMANDED OUR ATTENTION FOR DECADES

By **Don Stradley**

If you only know Steve Farhood from his regular appearances on "ShoBox: The Next Generation," or perhaps as a ringside scorer on the Premier Boxing Champions series, you might be surprised to learn that his presence in boxing goes back to the late 1970s, when he started out as a journalist. And if you weren't around during Farhood's time at KO Magazine, you missed out on something special.

Most of the boxing coverage of that time was found in THE RING and several other magazines, plus the big-city newspapers. The Associated Press and United Press International covered the major fights, as did Sports Illustrated. With newsstands carrying, at times, half a dozen magazines, it seemed boxing was well-covered. But with the surprising success of the 1976 Olympic team, there appeared to be room for another publication. Stanley Weston, who already published several boxing magazines, launched KO in 1980 through London Publishing. It was slightly different in tone, with a slew of young writers contributing, including a Brooklyn guy named Steve Farhood.

Perhaps unwittingly, this staff of youngbloods was about to change the way things were done. KO seemed fresh and lively, the smirking, long-haired nephew of the older magazines on the market. It was soon outselling THE RING.

"I wasn't a hardcore fan when I started writing about boxing in the late '70s," Farhood told THE RING. "So I had few preconceived notions about the sport. I was 21 years old, I had a journalism degree and I was happy to be writing about anything."

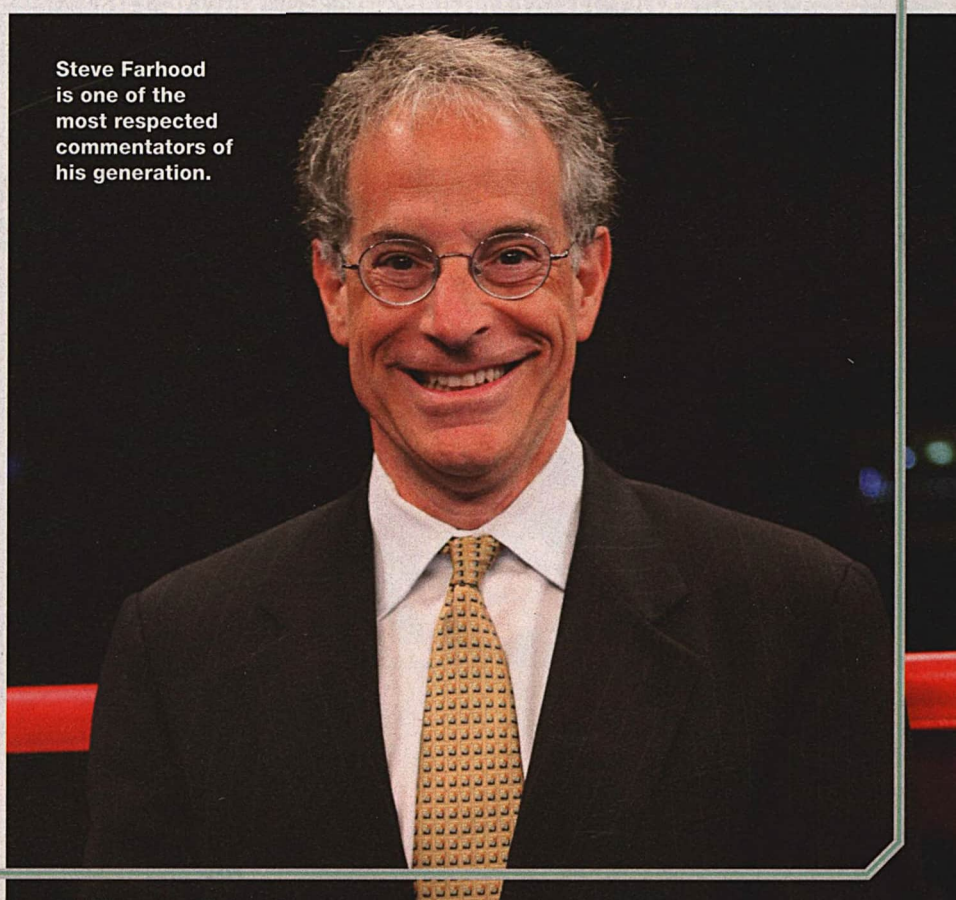
The clip and photo files at the office fascinated Farhood. "It seemed boxing history was at my fingertips, and I was eager to learn." Still, KO was rooted in the present, with a focus on new stars. The philosophy seemed to be one of fun, with a dash of cynicism.

According to Farhood, there was no deliberate attempt to distinguish himself from the older writers on the beat. "I don't think [any] of us were trying to write differently from the established journalists. We were just being ourselves, and we had been given the opportunity to establish our own voices. I tried to take a somewhat irreverent and creative approach, and that hasn't changed in 40 years.

"One thing that might've influenced our styles was that we were writing so many damn articles and columns – putting out several magazines per month, London Publishing was particularly prolific – so we were almost forced to at least occasionally think outside the box. And as both an editor and writer, I was always conscious of the fact that I was working for a magazine, and not a newspaper. To me, there was a huge difference."

The years at KO led to Farhood's lengthy term as editor of THE RING, plus stints on ESPN, CNN, the USA Network's "Tuesday Night Fights," Showtime and the PBC series. Considering he wasn't a die-hard boxing fan when he started, Farhood has played an important part in how the sport was covered during the last four decades.

He'll be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame this June as part of the Observer category. It's a fitting accolade for a fine journalist, an astute analyst and one of boxing's genuinely nice guys. RING



Steve Farhood is one of the most respected commentators of his generation.

A FIGHTER'S FRIEND

LOU DUVA'S PASSION FOR BOXING AND COMPLETE DEVOTION TO HIS BOXERS – AS WELL AS THAT BEAUTIFUL FACE – MADE HIM ONE OF A KIND

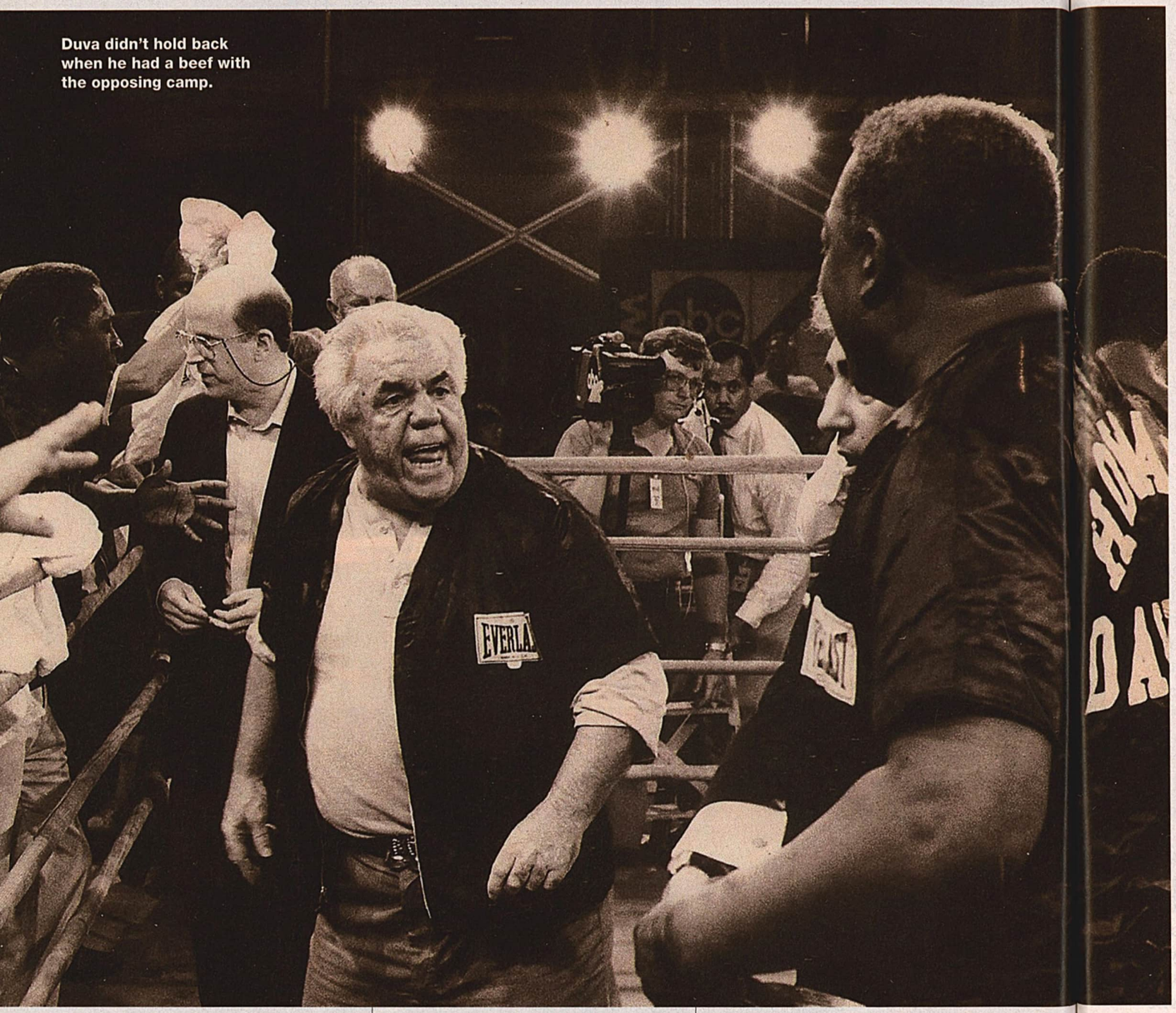
By **Ron Borges**

Lou Duva may have been the greatest cornerman who ever lived. Not the greatest trainer or manager. Not the greatest fighter, as he would be the first to admit. But surely the greatest friend to every fighter he ever harangued into boxing better than that fighter thought possible at the moment Duva's face was in his.

And oh what a face it was.

Duva, who passed away on March 8 in his hometown of Paterson, New Jersey, at the age of 94, trained and managed 19 world champions, but he cajoled and catered to many more and loved them all. Whether they had the talent and the will to become what Evander Holyfield and Pernell Whitaker once were, which is to say among the greatest fighters of their time, or just the grit of Eddie Hopson and Raul Marquez, who became more than their gifts would have predicted, or were just some unknown four-round kid with a dream but little else behind it, Lou Duva loved them equally because he loved nothing more in the world than family and fighters. »

Lou Duva was elated when one his fighters (Pernell Whitaker in this case) succeeded.



Duva didn't hold back when he had a beef with the opposing camp.

To him they were one and the same, which is why they so often sat at his dinner table on a Sunday and why he fought so hard for every one of them, both figuratively and literally. Lou Duva went to his grave knowing who he was. His fighters also knew. To the end, he was a fight guy and a fighter's friend.

"His life was boxing," recalled Marquez, who was 15 and still an amateur training at Kenny Weldon's gym in Houston when he first met Duva. Later, Duva would lead him to a world championship and stay loyal to him come hell or high water. In boxing that's saying something because there is plenty of both.

"He was real," Marquez continued. "He wasn't a bullshitter. If he said he'd do something for you, he'd do it and he didn't mind if you reminded him of what he'd promised because he delivered.

"His life was boxing, even late in his life. I called him once a month when he was in assisted living in New Jersey. He could only talk for five or 10 minutes because he had trouble breathing but he always wanted to know how my family was doing and if I had any young fighters.

"I was a young kid so he was old to me the first day I met him. Here was this guy getting into fights with referees and telling off young people. I thought, 'He's crazy but he's tough. Nothing's gonna stop that guy.' He wanted to help us all.

"Lou knew how to push your buttons when things were going bad. He was one of the most honest people in boxing. I'm not saying that because he's passed. I'm saying it because it's the truth. Everybody needs a guy like Lou in their corner."

Exaggeration was sometimes a necessity because he was in the business of selling tickets, from his early days promoting small shows at Ice World, a hockey rink in Totowa, New Jersey, to his peak as one of the most influential managers in the sport after he and his family joined forces with a former music promoter named Shelly Finkel to form Main Events and signed Holyfield, Whitaker, Mark Breland, Meldrick Taylor, Tyrell Biggs and Virgil Hill from the 1984 U.S. Olympic team.

But in boxing, exaggeration is not dishonesty. It's business, and few loved the business more than Lou Duva.

"HBO used to have a saying that they were the heart and soul of boxing," recalled Duva's longtime friend and fellow trainer, Teddy Atlas. "That really belonged to Lou Duva. From the 1970s on he was one of the faces of boxing and the Duvas were bigger than anyone for a long while.

"All those great fighters they had did business with his son, Dan, who was brilliant. But they signed with Lou. He made those kids believe in him. He had some of the greatest fighters of the 1970s and 1980s, the last era when boxing was truly healthy. He was the face you saw in their corner and it was the kind of face you'd expect to see in a corner.

"It was a rugged, tough face but there was something else behind it: humanity. He was in the trenches with his fighters. When you looked at that face you thought, 'This is a boxing guy.'"

Duva craved nothing more than that. Unlike so many in the sport whose egos exceed their abilities, Duva willingly admitted his son was the business brains and for many years George Benton was the training brains behind their many champions. Lou's job was different.

He was the recruiter, the master motivator and, on fight night, the man willing to fight for them. He fought with referees, promoters, commissioners and even opponents. One night he exchanged punches with then-world champion Roger Mayweather after Mayweather had given Duva's fighter, Vinny Pazienza, a rough time of it. Duva left the ring looking worse than Paz, a gash dripping blood from his cheek.

'IT WAS A RUGGED, TOUGH FACE BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE BEHIND IT: HUMANITY.' – Teddy Atlas

He did it most memorably after heavyweight Andrew Golota was rightfully disqualified for repeated low blows against Riddick Bowe. When the fight was stopped a near-riot broke out as Bowe's supporters attacked Golota. Lou ended up in the middle of it, throwing punches and insults and defending Golota until he collapsed in the ring with what was feared to be a heart attack.

He was carried out of the ring on a stretcher, the only time people could remember a cornerman going out on his shield. He'd been felled by a shock from a portable cardiac stimulator he wore as a result of a heart attack several years earlier that was set off by the stress of the melee. He'd gotten overwrought, which on fight night was a normal occurrence for Duva.

When his fighters became a staple of HBO Boxing in the 1980s, the network finally had to step in and ask him if he could tone down his language in the corner. His appeals to guys like Holyfield and Taylor often were profane and always pointed.

He agreed, but not totally. He began cursing in Italian instead. That didn't help the international broadcast but it helped out HBO. Hard to know what it did for the fighters but they understood him in the way a kid understands his sometimes volatile but always loveable uncle.

"It's important to a fighter to have someone who believes in you when the wolves are at the door and it's about time to leave the locker room and you're wondering if you're good enough," Atlas said. "In those moments, Lou Duva was right there for his fighters to tell them, 'Kid, you can be champion of the world. There's nothing to worry about. I'm here with you.'

"Every fighter needs that but they don't all get it. Every one of Lou's fighters had that. Whether he really believed it or not is another matter, but he'd convince the fighter. That was his job and he was better at it than anyone I ever saw.

"A great cornerman can win a fight and Lou was a great cornerman. Angelo Dundee was too. Angelo did it for Ali in the first Liston fight and against Henry Cooper when he was hurt and suddenly his glove was split and they had to take time to find another one. By the time they got it, Ali's head was clear and he knocked Cooper out.

"Lou did the same thing for Johnny Bumphus. Bumphus was near the back end of his career and he was having a tough night. The fight was on national TV and they were experimenting with open scoring.

"Bumphus got cut but Lou had a great cut man – Ace Marotta could stop a shotgun blast. But Lou saw Johnny was ahead and he told Ace to leave the cut alone. The ref comes over and Lou says, 'It's bad. We can't stop it.' They went to the scorecards and his fighter got the decision. No one in the arena realized who won that fight. It was Lou.

"I think Lou loved boxing because he came up the hard way. He saw in boxing, on the right night, no matter how unfair life had been to a kid, if you were tough enough and determined enough you could make the world fair. You could make them raise your hand. He was always looking for that moment for every kid he took in."

Born on May 28, 1922, in New York City, Duva was one of seven children in a large Italian family that moved to Paterson, New Jersey, when he was 4. Long on love but short on money, everyone worked, including young Lou. He sold newspapers in front of Paterson City Hall and unloaded vegetable trucks in exchange for a box of tomatoes or whatever else he could get to bring home.

His older brother Carl was a local club fighter and a 10-year-old Duva used to carry his gym bag and spit bucket for him. Soon Lou was boxing in local smokers for $5 a fight. It didn't take him long to realize he was willing but limited.

"Look at this face," he used to say. "You don't think I got this face being a ballet dancer, do ya?" No one made that mistake.

At 15, he dropped out of high school to help his family but once explained that he'd been "asked to leave school because of pneumonia. Not that I had it. I couldn't spell it."

He forged his birth certificate to gain admittance into the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the Depression Era's New Deal programs, and was shipped to the Pacific Northwest. There he would learn to drive a truck, which would serve him well after World War II when he opened what eventually became a trucking company with a fleet of 32 delivery trucks. He would also become a bail bondsman and a union organizer for the Teamsters but spent more hours at Stillman's Gym on Eighth Avenue learning about boxing from the great old trainers, such as Ray Arcel and Whitey Bimstein, than he did making early-morning deliveries to the Garment District.

'I LET LOU GO AND ALL OF A SUDDEN EVERYONE STARTED TROUBLE FROM ALL OVER.' – Evander Holyfield

Duva joined the Army in World War II and eventually ended up as a boxing coach at Fort Hood in Texas before returning to New Jersey and posting an unimpressive 5-10-1 professional record. By then boxing had become an addiction he would never shake.

He became friends with Rocky Marciano, a friendship that lasted until the great heavyweight's death in a plane crash in 1969. Some 21 years later, when Duva stood in the center of the ring holding up the hand of his own heavyweight champion, Evander Holyfield, after he knocked out Buster Douglas, Duva pointed to the sky.

"That was for Rocky," he said. And he meant it.

"That was what he always dreamed of," Atlas said. "That kept him going through all the turmoil that comes with boxing. That belief that one day it would happen. And it did. When they won the heavyweight championship, that was it! That was validation for all those years at Ice World."

Yet in some ways it was at Ice World where he was at his happiest and maybe at his best. There he created a family business with his kids selling tickets, hustling to keep the bouts together and, occasionally, adding a bit more drama than reality produced.

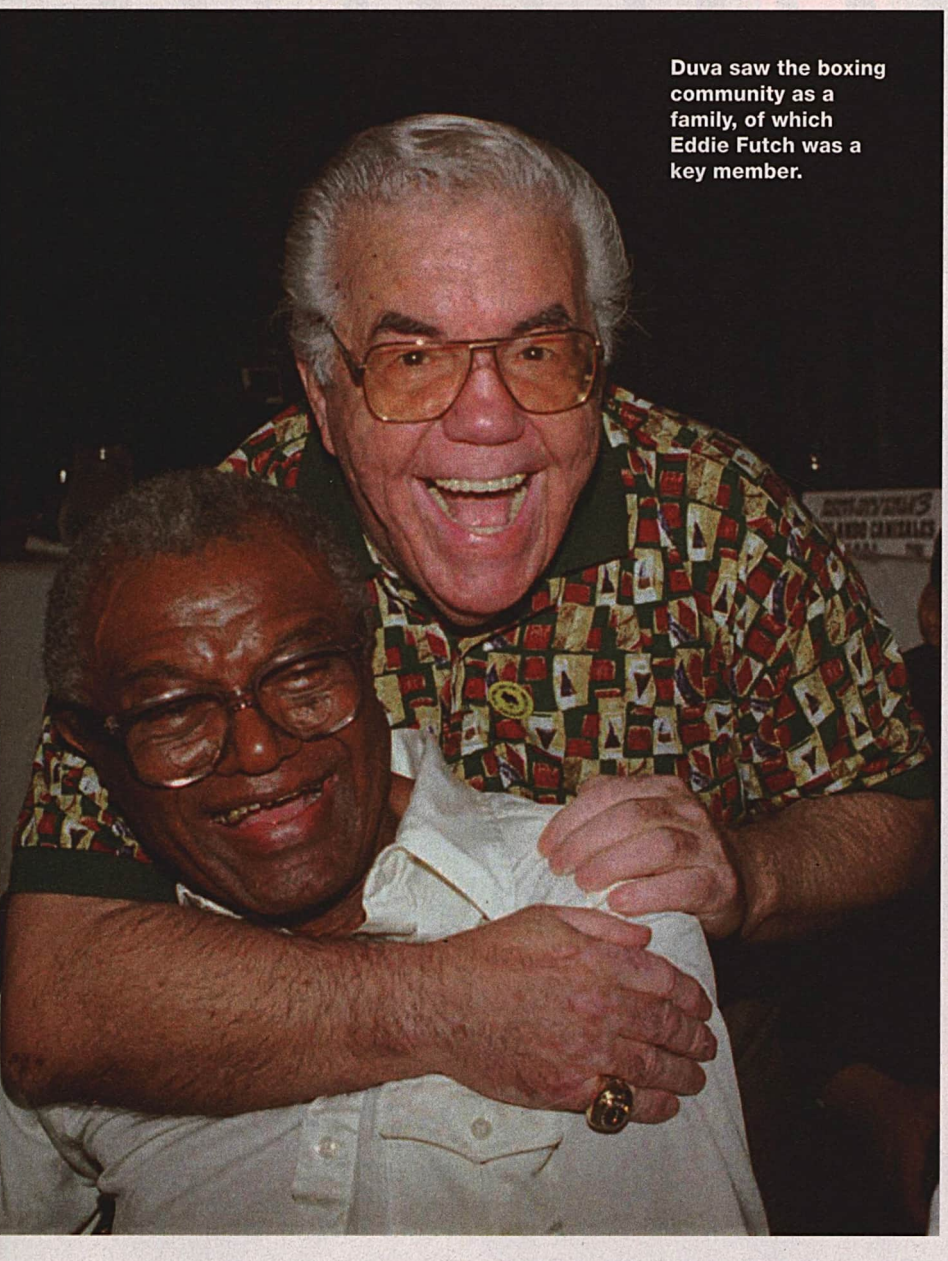
In 1974 he was promoting a local show at the Teamsters Hall in West Paterson headlined by a former Irish Olympian named Christy Elliott. Tickets weren't moving as he'd hoped, so Duva announced that Elliott would be facing an African fighter named Nikita Tar Hocker, who he claimed was a prince from Zaire. This was barely 18 months after Ali had defeated George Foreman in that little-known country and so carried with it some cachet with boxing folks.

Unfortunately, Hocker carried little boxing ability and no connection to Zaire. He was actually a guy named Burnell Scott, a kid from Camden who worked on a trash truck and fought on weekends. That didn't matter to Duva, who had Scott's brother and sister lead him into the ring dressed in tribal outfits, used makeup to paint his face and soon enough had filled some seats.

They didn't have to stay long. Elliott scored a fourth-round knockout for his fifth straight win. Hocker went back to the trash truck, his record lowered to 6-15-1. He was an African prince no more.

Duva kept that kind of hustle going. Once he had a fighter carried into the ring in a coffin. Another time he used a 70-year-old ring card "girl" to attract the senior crowd. Slowly the business grew into a partnership with ESPN, which agreed to televise a monthly show from Ice World in 1979 that showcased future world titleholders Bumphus, Rocky Lockridge and Bobby Czyz.

Duva's big break finally came in 1981, when Sugar Ray Leonard's adviser, Mike Trainer, wanted to cut out boxing's biggest promoters, Bob



Duva saw the boxing community as a family, of which Eddie Futch was a key member.

Arum and Don King. So Trainer convinced Leonard to allow the Duvas to promote his pay-per-view extravaganza against Thomas Hearns, a show that grossed $40 million and cost only $13 million to stage. That financial windfall helped propel the Duvas to the top of the boxing world.

Three years later, with help from Shelly Finkel, they landed that 1984 gold medal bonanza from the Olympics and began to build an empire. All Lou's boxing dreams were coming true, but in 1996 his son, Dan, died of brain cancer and things began to unravel. Four years later, Main Events had dissolved from a family business into warring factions that split the family. Although boxing would remain his life's work, much of the joy was gone.

"His one regret was, as much as he'd done to keep fighters happy, he couldn't keep the battling factions of his own family together," said Tim Smith, a longtime boxing writer who co-authored Duva's autobiography, "A Fighting Life." "He was trying to keep everyone happy and in effect no one was happy. That was a painful thing for him."

Although he would form Duva Boxing with his other son and daughter, they would never again reach the heights Main Events scaled with Holyfield, Whitaker, Taylor and the rest. But for those who knew him best, he was still living a dream because he was still spending time with the people he loved most.

"It didn't matter if he was in Las Vegas or Madison Square Garden or some boxing joint in San Antonio or Ice World," Smith said. "It didn't matter what level of fighter he was working with. In the end he was just happy to be around fighters."

Arguably his best, Holyfield, wrote the forward for that book. In it he admitted he'd never understood how hard Duva fought for him until after they split following his loss to Michael Moorer.

Holyfield was misdiagnosed following that fight and told he had a heart problem. Duva urged him to retire, and when Holyfield chose to ignore the advice he did it without a familiar face in his corner.

"Lou Duva wouldn't let anyone do anything to me," Holyfield once said, long after their breakup. "I let Lou go and all of a sudden everyone started trouble from all over. A lot of things I went through wouldn't have happened to me if I still had Lou. I made my life harder when I got rid of the man. I didn't know how important it was to have somebody argue for you."

Duva did more than that. He could tell a story, charm a room, feed a family, advance an argument, counsel a confused kid and level the kind of malapropism that made promoter Lou DiBella call him "boxing's Yogi Berra."

Asked once to sum up boxing, he told DiBella he could do it in two words.

"You never know," he said.

In boxing you never do, but if Lou Duva was in your corner, you knew one thing: He was ready to fight for you.

"Give him a bucket, a young fighter and a dream and he was happy," Atlas said. "The next fighter, that's what kept him going. He was a lifer." RING

‘NO COMING BACK NOW’

PAULIE MALIGNAGGI FINALLY CALLS IT QUITS AFTER HIS KO LOSS TO **SAM EGGINGTON**

By **Thomas Hauser**

Paulie Malignaggi got knocked out by a body shot in the eighth round of his March 4 fight against Sam Eggington in London. The image of Malignaggi lying on the canvas in agony, unable to rise, wasn’t pretty.

When Malignaggi was in his prime, Eggington wouldn’t have been able to hit him with a handful of rice. But Paulie, 36, is far removed from his prime. On March 4, he looked as out of place in the ring as a 50-year-old man dating a 20-year-old woman.

I like Paulie. I’ve always liked Paulie. I met him when he was 20 years old and chronicled his career in boxing as he moved from infancy to an old man as a fighter.

I was glad the Eggington fight ended on a body shot

Sam Eggington (background) ended Paulie Malignaggi’s career on March 4.

and not a concussive blow to the head. But punches to the liver add up too.

On December 11, 1981, Muhammad Ali fought Trevor Berbick in the last bout of The Greatest's illustrious ring career. By that time, Ali was a shell of his former self. Maryum Ali, Muhammad's oldest child, later told me, "I wanted him to lose. I wanted him to win but I didn't because, if he won, he'd keep fighting and I didn't want him to fight anymore. I was in the last row of the first level of the stadium that night. I remember saying to myself, 'If he loses, he won't fight again and I'll be happy. But if he wins, he'll go on and on.'"

Those were my sentiments when I turned on the television to watch Malignaggi fight Sam Eggington.

Paulie understood the folly of what he was doing. In May 2016, he sat for an interview I conducted for a documentary entitled "Ali: A Life."

"Ali, Sugar Ray Robinson, Joe Louis; they all fought long past their prime," Paulie told me. "I think the message in that is, no matter how much greatness you achieve, it will pass and so you have to learn to let it go. Sometimes you want to hold on to it so tight and it has to be ripped from you. The same ego that made you great can also cost you. The ego is the reason you become great. It's what drives you. But it's also what makes you stay around too long, and there has to be a way to release it gracefully as opposed to having it ripped from you and shredding you in the process. Trust me, it's easier said than done. But when you've seen it right in front of you in the cases of those great fighters, it doesn't become any more reality than that.

"There are situations where you have achieved so much and it's hard to walk away," Paulie continued. "And there are situations where you might have achieved enough but want more. When you have achieved greatness, like Ali, you become addicted to the fame. You become addicted to the power it gives you. You become addicted to the success. Then there are situations like with myself where I've achieved a lot but I feel like I could achieve just a little bit more and maybe my name will get a little bit more respect in history. You start to believe that you can summon this out of you if you really, really believe in it because your self-belief is what got you there in the first place. Obviously, it's not the case. Nature is nature. We all get old, so both situations present a very harsh set of circumstances, a very harsh set of decisions you have to make that will make your head spin. They really will make your head spin because, when you go, you're never coming back. And the way you felt last year, you can never feel like that again. The way you felt two years ago, you will never feel that again. You're only getting older and you're only going to feel less good."

Over the years, I kept writing this-is-the-end columns about Paulie. And I always had to write another. "There's still a bit of coming to grips with the fact that you're not going to fight anymore," he told BoxingScene.com. "People think you're weird that you can't come to grips with something that to them is so simple. But in reality, it's not so simple. You want to dream for just a little bit longer. The sun's coming up, though. It's almost time to stop dreaming."

All of us take risks in varying degrees. We don't eat as well as we should. We don't exercise enough. We indulge in alcohol or recreational drugs. Paulie exposed himself to the risks inherent in continuing to fight because he craved the high he got

Malignaggi had his ups (Zab Judah, previous page) and downs (Danny Garcia).

from fighting.

"I don't need the money," Paulie explained in a piece that aired last year before a fight against Gabriel Bracero on Showtime. "I don't need the fame. But I still need to fight. Even my friends think I'm a little crazy, and maybe I am. I know fighters don't age gracefully. I know fighters get hurt. But I also know in my heart, I've got to fight at least one more time. Why? Love. Not the normal kind. More like a bad girlfriend. She's broken my heart; she'll do it again. And I keep coming back for more. My mind knows better; my heart doesn't. You see, boxing loved me when no one else would. I was a kid from Sicily, a high school dropout. Boxing gave me things I couldn't imagine. Boxing let me dream. That's what I want. That's what I'm fighting for. That chance to dream again."

But the losses continued to mount and the purses got smaller. After Malignaggi lost to Eggington, my fear was that, several months from now, Paulie would say, "I can't end my career on the canvas. I want to go out a winner. All I want is one more fight against a guy who doesn't pose much of a threat. Then I'll quit, I promise."

Part of me is still afraid that will happen. But two days after losing to Eggington, Paulie sent me an email that read, "I will most definitely focus on [commentating] now. No more coming back."

Later that day, he officially announced his retirement.

I'm still worried. Paulie is an expert boxing analyst for Showtime and Sky Sports, one of the best in the business. But every blow to the head he took in fights and in sparring had the potential to cause incremental brain damage. That's boxing's often-unspoken fear. One doesn't have to reference Muhammad Ali to make the point. Go to a big fight and there are reminders everywhere. Former fighters, including more than a few world champions who slur their words and don't connect their thoughts as well as they used to.

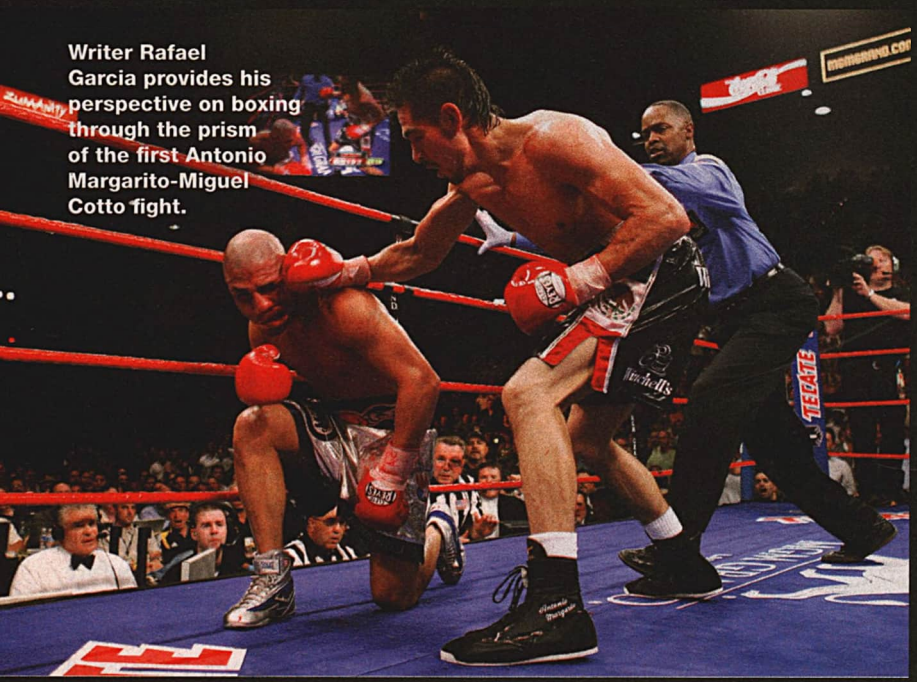
Meanwhile, let's celebrate what Paulie accomplished. He won 36 professional fights and held both the IBF 140-pound and WBA 147-pound titles. So many of today's fighters talk tough and disappear when it's time to sign a contract. Paulie didn't talk tough but he went in tough. Look at the fighters who beat him before Eggington: Miguel Cotto, Ricky Hatton, Juan Diaz, Amir Khan, Adrien Broner, Shawn Porter and Danny Garcia. Paulie fought all of them when they were in their prime.

So give Paulie credit for his ring skills and heart, his fighting through the pain of a broken orbital bone and multiple broken hands. Smile when you think of his ever-changing hair and sense of style. Appreciate his honesty and self-deprecating sense of humor.

"The good thing," Paulie told me not long ago, "is that I'm in some historic boxing highlight reels that people will watch forever. The bad thing is that I'm getting knocked out." RING

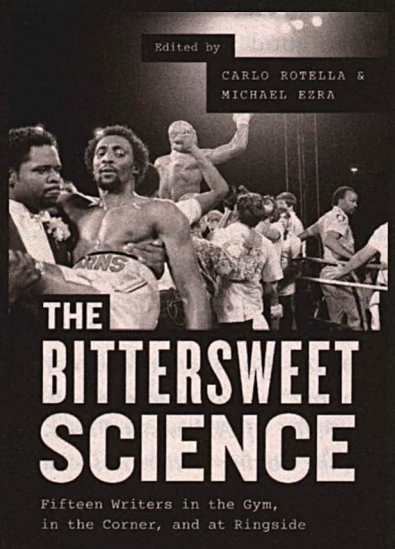
Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

A DEEPER LOOK AT BOXING



Writer Rafael Garcia provides his perspective on boxing through the prism of the first Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto fight.

COLLECTION OF ESSAYS PROVIDES FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON 'THE BITTERSWEET SCIENCE'



"THE BITTERSWEET SCIENCE"
University of Chicago Press
Edited by Carlo Rotella and Michael Ezra

"The Bittersweet Science" is a collection of 15 essays about the sport and business of boxing by contemporary writers. Some of the pieces have been previously published. Others were written exclusively for this book. As with any anthology, some entries are better than others. Ten of the pieces merit particular praise. Listed alphabetically by author, they were written by Robert Anasi, Brin-Jonathan Butler, Donovan Craig, Charles Farrell, Rafael Garcia, Gordon Marino, Hamilton Nolan, Carlo Rotella, Sam Sheridan and Carl Weingarten.

In an introduction to the book, Rotella and Ezra write, "The more you know about boxing, the more you discover that you never truly know what's going on. No matter how many layers of meaning you peel away, there will always be others beneath them."

In that regard, the essays go beyond what the editors call "the usual sports-page concern with winners, losers, and athletic drama." They cover a wide swath of boxing territory from the opinionated and knowledgeable Charles Farrell writing unapologetically about fixing fights to Brin-Jonathan Butler's in-depth exploration of Roy Jones Jr.'s psyche. There are dramatic accounts of ring action at the professional and amateur levels and a look at long-ago ring history.

The book also serves the purpose of introducing boxing fans to some good writers they might not know. One of these scribes is Rafael Garcia.

"The truth is," Garcia writes, "there's no purity in boxing. Not all we see is real, and we'll never see it all.

"Seen from a distance," Garcia continues, "boxing is a deceptively simple spectacle: two men beating on each other until cunning, physical prowess, or a combination thereof produces a winner. Many who watch boxing never move past their romantic notion of the sport, constantly framing what they see in terms of concepts such as courage, valor, honor, and pride. Yet these same notions are hammered into irrelevance by forces significantly more pressing to the fighters and the suits promoting and managing them; namely money, power, and influence."

Viewing boxing through the prism of the first fight between Miguel Cotto and Antonio Margarito, Garcia observes, "You can't just jump to the end of a fight and skip everything that happens in between. To do that would be to miss everything that makes boxing boxing. More than in any other sport, how and why one fighter wins and the other loses is of the utmost importance and can have massive consequences for each one's future."

Garcia's description of the seventh round of Margarito's now-tarnished victory over Cotto is particularly good writing: "It was either brutal or thrilling to watch, depending on whom you were rooting for or what side of your brain was calling the shots. It was at this moment that what had been billed as a fight became a rite, as there was little question from that point on as to who was the stronger fighter causing the damage and who was the one getting hurt. Cotto kept fighting, of course, after the turn of the tide in round seven. But for the rest of the night, Margarito's most significant enemy was no longer Miguel Cotto but the timekeeper. The contest was decided in that brutal round. As Margarito walked back to his corner at the end of the seventh, his face and torso and back splattered with Cotto's fresh blood, he nodded to the fans celebrating at ringside. It was clear that thereafter all Margarito had to do was keep hacking and chopping away at Cotto, keep grinding him down and keep hammering him with those heavy fists until Cotto couldn't take it anymore. Then, at some point, Cotto would stop fighting, and that would be it. That's exactly the path the contest took. Cotto went from sharpshooter to prey, just as Margarito went from lumbering target to heartless hitman."

Garcia then asks the question, "What does it say about us that we're willing participants – and paying customers – in this sort of blood spectacle in which someone as hurt and helpless as Cotto was for a large part of the contest had to endure so much physical punishment from a man who was obviously going to defeat him that night. The question is not novel in any way, but that doesn't take away from its sting. Fans of boxing have tried to deal with it for a long time, and all of us who enjoy the sport have learned that a corollary of our love for it is that we have to make peace with more than a few ugly truths."

Finally, Garcia notes, "There are times when boxing matches resemble more a bullfight than they do a sports contest, when only a deus ex machina will do in changing the outcome. Bullfights are all about the journey and not the destination. The inevitable outcome is that of a bull lying dead even though there are many ways to arrive at that outcome."

Charles Farrell, a former fight manager, also sees boxing as a hard sport.

In "Why I Fixed Fights," Farrell begins with the premise that "no sport is romanticized more than boxing." But the truth of the matter as he sees it is, "Boxers are born poor and they usually die poor. For their short spell in the business, they inhabit a place in its professional hierarchy that all but guarantees they'll remain poor even during their active careers."

Getting to the heart of his subject, Farrell writes, "Why did I fix fights? I fixed fights because it was the smart thing to do." He then recounts setting up a fight for Leon Spinks in the dying years of Neon Leon's ring career against a novice named John Carlo, who was making his pro debut. Farrell engaged in all manner of chicanery, including the creation of a fictitious 13-2 record for Carlo. But he ruefully acknowledges, "I failed to take the one step needed to guarantee the result. I didn't fix the fight."

Carlo knocked Spinks out in the first round.

"In the real world," Farrell concludes, "boxers and their managers prearranging the outcome of fights, working collusively against a hostile system, makes sense. Fixing fights, even at the expense of the public, isn't just good business. It's a survival strategy for the disenfranchised class in boxing: the fighters themselves."

Sam Sheridan weighs in with an essay entitled "What Boxing Is For." Among the thoughts Sheridan shares are:

- "Not all men are created equal in boxing, and we know it."
- "Professional boxing is about money. If it's about anything else, you probably shouldn't be doing it."
- "Fighting is a little like losing your virginity. Before you do it, there is a lot of speculation, a lot of anxiety, some wild flights of imagination. Then you start doing it and you find, 'Oh, this is fighting. I'm still me.' You aren't transformed into something else. It's not some dark door you pass through. The world is still the world."
- "[Watching a fight] has to be live. Tape it and watch it later, and it's like reading about a fine wine versus drinking it. It has to be happening in the moment. We're all discovering it together, the tick of seconds, the real-time surge of real wonder in the crowd."

A sampling of other worthwhile thoughts in "The Bittersweet Science" include:

- Gordon Marino: "It's as though the crowd gets its red badge of courage with the fighter's blood."
- Donovan Craig: "Usually a street fight is over so quickly that you don't have time to appreciate it. In a boxing match, you have time to appreciate what's going on."
- Brin-Jonathan Butler: "If you're looking for happy endings for your heroes, boxing remains one of the worst places in America to look."

"The Bittersweet Science" is a good book. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book – "A Hard World: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing" – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism.

A TURNING POINT

THE ANTHONY JOSHUA-WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO FIGHT WILL HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION

Anthony Joshua (far left) is just getting started. Wladimir Klitschko (far right) is trying to hang on.

Anthony Joshua's April 29 fight against Wladimir Klitschko has that rare quality: two Olympic gold medalists who consider themselves gentleman boxers and insist their talking will be done inside the squared circle.

It's certainly the antithesis to the sound and fury that surrounded the much-hyped David Haye-Tony Bellew grudge fight. In fact, the antithesis in every conceivable way. Joshua-Klitschko means something, for starters. There are two heavyweight straps on the line. Better than that, it is a fascinating collision of old and new, master and apprentice. And it will take place at a football stadium, Wembley Stadium, in front of 90,000 fans. It's the heavyweight matchup of the year. It will tell us a lot about the future of the division. It will tell us even more about Anthony Joshua.

It's for all these reasons that Joshua and Klitschko feel no need to act up or manufacture some kind of storyline or animosity in order to sell their product. I'm not sure either would be capable of doing so even if it was required of them, but, still, it's a mark of the fight's quality that neither have resorted to the tired, well-thumbed script of others. It's refreshing. It feels like the palate cleanser we all need.

Klitschko says he is "obsessed" with getting his belts back, while Joshua, an advocate of the "stay humble, stay hungry" mentality, hopes to capitalize on Klitschko's 41 years and send him into retirement. It's all about timing. Either Joshua and his team have got it spot-on and will feast on a great champion's carcass or Klitschko will delve into his memory banks, roll back the clock, get that jab pumping again, drain Joshua in clinches and re-emerge as The Man having taken a raw novice to school.

For the future of the division, a Joshua win is important. He has so far done everything asked of him as a professional – winning all 18 of his bouts by knockout – and fights the way heavyweights used to fight, which is to say with aggression and purpose and violent intent. There is no more watchable, marketable or important heavyweight in the world right now.

But, that said, his best win is still a toss-up between Dominic Breazeale and Dillian Whyte, two men with whom Klitschko would have toyed in his prime. And it's that little issue, more than anything, that makes this fight between Joshua and Klitschko so fascinating, so hard to call. Has the jump in class been carefully measured and timed to perfection? Or will the difference in levels be Joshua's undoing?

Tyson Fury, the undisputed noise in the division, fully expects Klitschko to expose Joshua on April 29. He has made this clear on countless occasions. But Fury has also ambitiously claimed he will be making a comeback of his own in May, which immediately calls into question anything the unbeaten heavyweight spouts from his various social media platforms. It's hard to believe these claims because Fury's U.K. Anti-Doping (UKAD) hearing is now scheduled for May 8 and he reportedly weighs somewhere around 25 stone (350 pounds). The odds, therefore, aren't great that he'll make a return this year, much less in May. »

Let's hope this mess does resolve itself. The heavyweight division is a quieter place without Fury, and that's not necessarily a good thing. His return, whether this May or next May, would be dynamite.

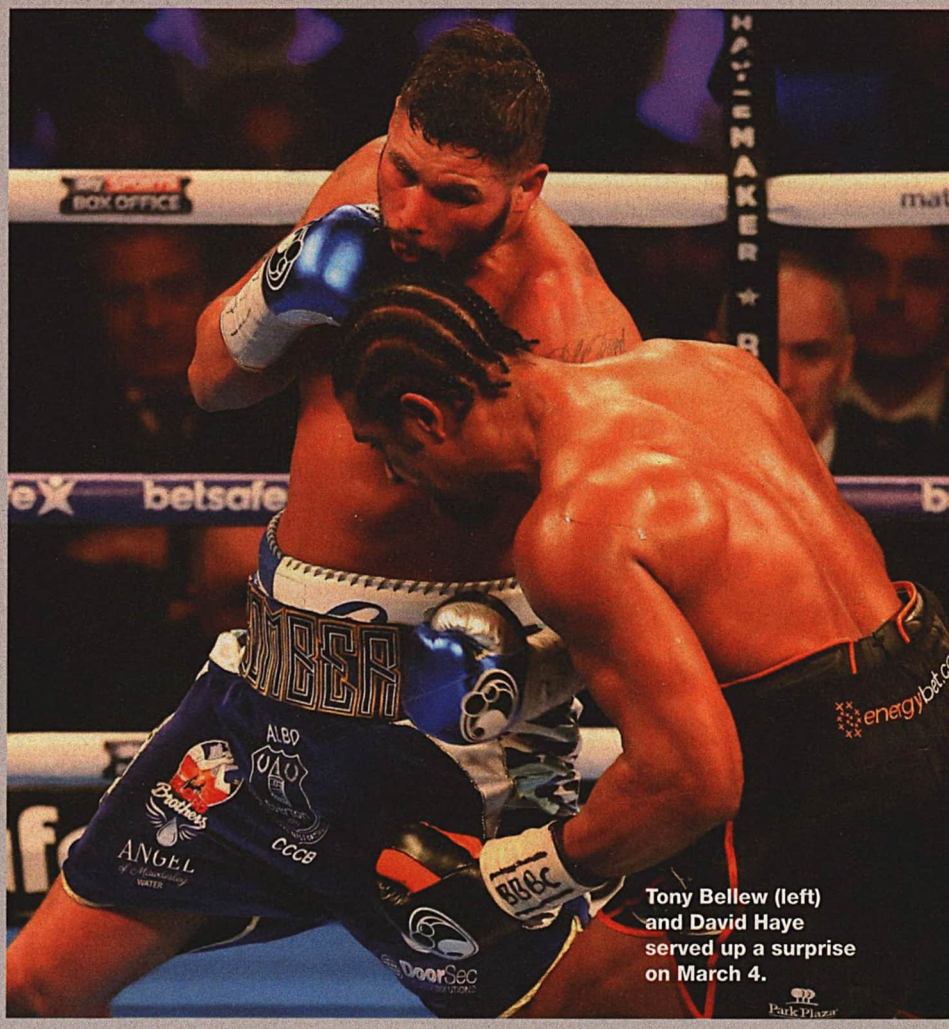
HAYE VS. BELLEW

Given what was essentially an event sold on hate and hyperbole and threats and forecasts, the heavyweight non-title fight between Tony Bellew and David Haye on March 4 still managed to surprise us all.

Bellew, according to Haye, was to be put to the sword in a round or two, succumbing to a devastating, highlight-reel knockout, and would likely spend his night in a hospital. The underdog was deemed out of his depth, a chubby cruiserweight titleholder who had no right campaigning at heavyweight. Meanwhile, according to Bellew, Haye was liable to fold when the going got tough. He was considered a bully, a frontrunner, a faded 36-year-old with only a good round or two left in a battered and broken-down body that is only one ill-timed move away from collapsing altogether.

That was the talk beforehand. The narrative. The plan. Yet, in actuality, Haye, despite the acid-tongued boasts, came nowhere near knocking Bellew out. Barely landed a clean shot, in fact. Nor did Bellew necessarily outlast Haye or expose him as someone who quits when the going gets tough. Instead, both came away proving themselves in certain areas while simultaneously showing flaws in others. Haye, in soldiering through for 4½ rounds with a torn Achilles, displayed a bravery and thirst for fighting many believed he lacked, whereas Bellew, in taking Haye's best shots and making him appear cumbersome in the early going, proved both his toughness and his credentials as a world-class fighter capable of performing on the big stage.

On the flip side, Haye's injury and early sloppiness framed him as a jaded prizefighter whose best days are behind him, while Bellew's inability to finish an ostensibly one-legged and supposedly "chinny" fighter didn't say a lot for his punching power at heavyweight.



Tony Bellew (left) and David Haye served up a surprise on March 4.

Funny how things turn out. In the end it was an injured Haye, not Bellew, who ended the night in a hospital. Worse still, the bizarre decision of his corner to ask him if he wanted to continue after Round 6 – a question to which he answered "yes," of course – may well end up doing more harm than good. They let him out for Rounds 7 and 8 and 9 and 10 and 11.

More damage was done, both to his head and his Achilles, and the final image was one of Haye gallantly swinging, unable to keep his footing, and being punched and bundled through the ropes in Round 11. His courage and power should not have been enough to keep him in the fight. He couldn't stand properly, couldn't move at all, and his defense, once the Achilles snapped, was nonexistent. We went away calling him a warrior. But a warrior, someone who gives and takes, is not something David Haye ever wanted to be called.

Before the fight, Bellew's coach, Dave Coldwell, implied that Shane McGuigan, Haye's coach, might be in awe of his star pupil – well, certainly his most famous pupil. It was an accusation denied by the 28-year-old McGuigan, but his decision to let Haye keep fighting when clearly debilitated was one that, at best, shines a light on McGuigan's lack of experience and, at worse, backs up Coldwell's claim.

Haye will be back. It's what he does now. It might take a while, as is his custom, but there are too many big fights out there, including a Bellew rematch, for him to do the right thing and call it a day. The more interesting takeaway from the March 4 fight is Bellew and his newfound presence as a heavyweight.

After all, if Haye was in line for a shot at a world heavyweight

titleholder off the back of a Bellew win, surely Bellew now stands to take advantage of similar opportunities? We're told Deontay Wilder has already made contact, which has appeal, as does a fight with Joseph Parker. Asked whether he'd fight fellow Brit Joshua, however, Bellew all of a sudden remembered he was a cruiserweight at heart. "No chance," he said. "A.J.'s running the game right now."

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

There is still a pining for Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s return to boxing and I can attest to his popularity, having interviewed him in March at the ICC in Birmingham for the events company Showfighter.

Mayweather held court in front of a crowd of paying punters and had them enraptured for over an hour. He opened up about the difficulties of his childhood and the secret to his success, revealed he regrets not fighting in the U.K. and, of course, discussed the possible "crossover" fight with mixed martial arts star Conor McGregor, one of the hottest properties in combat sports.

"McGregor has bosses. I don't have a boss," Mayweather said. "If Conor McGregor really wants to fight me, we can make it happen. But is he blowing smoke up everybody's ass?

"In one fight I made more than Conor McGregor has made in his whole career. The difference between me and him is this: He has to fight. If I was him and I was smart, before I lose again in the UFC, I'd let Floyd Mayweather kick my ass for a lot of money. It makes business sense."

Mayweather brought with him protege Gervonta "Tank" Davis, who will defend his IBF junior lightweight title against England's Liam Walsh on May 20 in London.

Walsh has waited and waited for his opportunity to emerge from the shadows and fight for a world title but, to win a belt, he'll have to somehow slow an express train in Davis, who has agreed to travel to England in exchange for a career-high payday.

Davis, plucked from obscurity by Mayweather after just 10 professional fights and now a world titleholder at the age of 22, was born and raised in Baltimore, "The Wire" territory, and has shown no aversion to doing things the hard way. He won his title in January with a stunning seventh-round knockout of Jose Pedraza and now, Mayweather says, is well on his way to becoming The (new) Best Ever.

"Gervonta Davis is very talented," said Mayweather. "He has a very interesting story. This is a kid who stayed in different foster homes and the orphanage. As soon as I saw him walk in the room, I said he's going to be world champion. I got him six fights and within 24 months he's world champion. He has the potential to be the closest thing to Floyd Mayweather."

Davis, it should be said, fights nothing like Mayweather. He is, in actual fact, far more aggressive and physical in his approach. He bullied Pedraza, beat him up the old-fashioned way and showcased his extensive repertoire of punches with a poise that belied his tender years. He's a fighter, all right. That much is clear. It's all he knows.

"I've always been a fighter, I had to fight," he said. "We were in and out of group homes as a foster kid. Me and my older brother were taken from my mother at the same time, so we were pretty tight. We were even fighting the other kids in the group homes. My uncle saw me fight in front of my house and one day he wanted to turn something negative into a positive, so he took me to the gym and I've been there ever since."

Davis, who has 16 knockouts in 17 fights, added: "Growing up in Baltimore, there were a lot of distractions. But I was so into boxing, it was like candy to me. The guys I looked up to as a kid are either dead or in jail. The guy who started me out was my coach's son. He died. He got killed in New Jersey. There were a lot of other older guys who got killed or are in jail. Growing up seeing what those guys were going through, trying to get money to feed their families ... that showed me."

Thirty-year-old Walsh, meanwhile, unbeaten in 21 fights and one of three brothers who box professionally, is arguably Britain's most underrated boxer. He hasn't had the Gervonta shine; he hasn't had the fanfare or the celebrity endorsement. But few fighters in Britain have Walsh's boxing brain, arsenal of skills and composure.

Frank Warren, Walsh's promoter, told me: "This matchup reminds me of Joe Calzaghe against Jeff Lacy. The Americans were saying that Lacy was 'the next Mike Tyson,' but Joe schooled him on a memorable night in Manchester. Liam is a very fine boxer, and I believe he can do the same as Calzaghe did 10 years ago." That would be some feat. Cheers.

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

TOP 10

1. CARL FRAMPTON
2. KELL BROOK
3. AMIR KHAN
4. LEE SELBY
5. JAMES DEGALE
6. JAMIE MCDONNELL
7. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
8. SCOTT QUIGG
9. TONY BELLEW
10. CALLUM SMITH

11-15: Terry Flanagan, Chris Eubank Jr., Ricky Burns, Anthony Crolla, Anthony Joshua

Through fights of March 19, 2017

EXCERPTS FROM THE RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag." The following excerpts are from the March 20 edition of the Monday mailbag.

JUAN, from Tijuana, says Gennady Golovkin deserved to retain his three major middleweight titles against Daniel Jacobs on March 18, figuring the odds/media favorite "did enough to win six or seven rounds" but believes the undefeated KO artist "let go several rounds looking for openings" while trying to keep his knockout streak alive. He gives Jacobs a lot of credit for getting up from a fourth-round knockdown and nearly unseating Golovkin, but thought the middleweight boogeyman could have gone to the body more. GGG's saving grace in the fight, according to Juan, may have been his rock-solid chin.

DOUGIE'S reply: Golovkin's chin is arguably the best in the sport. I agree that he was headhunting too much with single power shots against Jacobs, but I'm going to give the Brooklyn-born challenger credit for neutralizing GGG's aggression to an extent with lateral movement and sporadic offense that kept the defending titleholder on his toes and always ready to take a step back.

Golovkin definitely needed to go to the body more than he did, especially after scoring the only knockdown of the bout in Round 4, but Jacobs fought an excellent fight according to his game plan, and he really dug deep in the late rounds. Jacobs and his team – which obviously had a great training camp – should be proud of the effort he put forth against Golovkin.

TOM, from Pennsylvania, thought Jacobs did a good job of neutralizing and frustrating Golovkin but believes the defending titleholder won the fight clearly, scoring it 115-112 for the Kazakhstani star. He was curious about Fischer's opinion on both middleweights' performances and what each does next. Tom also thought Roman Gonzalez clearly beat Srisaket Sor Rungvisai and wonders what Chocolatito will do next in the wake of his razor-thin majority decision loss to the underdog Thai veteran (hoping the Nicaraguan hero goes for a big-money fight against Japanese wunderkind Naoya Inoue before he completely burns out).

DOUGIE'S reply: I've read that Gonzalez wants an immediate rematch with Sor Rungvisai and I think he has a right to try to regain the WBC 115-pound title after suffering what most viewed as a controversial decision loss. If Inoue were to suddenly challenge Gonzalez and record money was put up for that fight, maybe that's a course Chocolatito would take, but I don't see that happening any time soon.

Like you (and most observers), I thought Gonzalez clearly beat Sor Rungvisai, scoring eight rounds to four in favor of the four-division titleholder (or 115-111 given the opening-round knockdown and later point deduction from Sor Rungvisai). Gonzalez simply outworked and outlanded the game challenger. However, Sor Rungvisai's fighting spirit and resolve cannot be overlooked. Thai fighters are seldom victorious here in the U.S. but they're usually uncommonly durable and well-conditioned, and he lived up to that tradition. Now that I think about it, Sor Rungvisai's victory against Gonzalez (whom most view as a future Hall of Famer) has to be the biggest Thai upset on U.S. soil since Saman Sorjaturong stopped Hall of Fame-enshrined Humberto "Chiquita" Gonzalez at The Forum in Inglewood, California, back in 1995 (a fight I attended as a fan).

Regarding Golovkin's performance against Jacobs, I thought it was solid and effective but unspectacular. I give him credit for quickly finding range with his jab and landing it consistently all night (without getting tagged too much in return). I didn't care much for Jacobs' holding tactics but it was effective in that it prevented Golovkin from getting off on the inside and the odds favorite didn't seem to have an answer for it.

Jacobs moved well, did a good job of staying off the ropes and was able to nail Golovkin with some solid shots, but I also thought he missed a lot and often landed on GGG's gloves and arms. (I also thought his technique fell off as his activity grew in the later rounds). If he had taken more chances earlier or stood his ground more down the stretch, maybe he could have won the fight on the official cards.

Where do they go next? Golovkin's plan is to unify all of the major sanctioning organization titles against remaining beltholder Billy Joe Saunders in June and then go for lineal/RING champ Canelo Alvarez in September. I still favor GGG to win those fights but many will view the potential matchups as more competitive (especially the Canelo showdown) after Jacobs' bold stand.

I have no idea what Jacobs does next but I hope he doesn't sit idle for six to nine months. Jacobs' adviser, Al Haymon, and management team need to take advantage of the career momentum he has right now and maneuver him into a significant middleweight (or super middleweight) match. Chris Eubank Jr. is out there (running his mouth on Twitter as usual). There's the winner of the proposed Hassan N'Dam-Ryota Murata fight for the WBA's No. 1 spot (so if Danny were to beat him, he'd

position himself for a rematch with GGG). There's also David Lemieux, Rob Brant, Willie Monroe Jr. and Sergey Derevyanchenko. There are legit contenders and solid up-and-comers for Jacobs to fight.

TAKU, from Japan, proposed two interesting mythical matchups: Salvador Sanchez vs. Julio Cesar Chavez at 130 pounds in 1984 (and he wonders what would have happened to Chavez's legacy if Sanchez hadn't died tragically before that fight could be made), and the version of Golovkin that fought Jacobs vs. the best version of Sergio Martinez at 160 pounds. He also had some thoughts on the Gonzalez-Sor Rungvisai fight and the 115-pound division. Though he thought Gonzalez beat Sor Rungvisai, he won't call the decision "a robbery" since it was "legitimately close, and it's clear that at 115 (pounds Gonzalez) isn't the beast that he used to be at 108/112." He wishes Gonzalez would have stayed at flyweight. He also hopes Inoue will move up to 118 pounds, where he can fight fellow Japanese star Shinsuke Yamanaka now that the 115-pound division is without another dominant force.

DOUGIE'S reply: I think Sanchez would have outpointed Chavez in a very close, hotly contested fight, and maybe done so in a rematch that would have shortened the Mexico City native's career. But I think Chavez still would have gone on to become a legend of the sport.

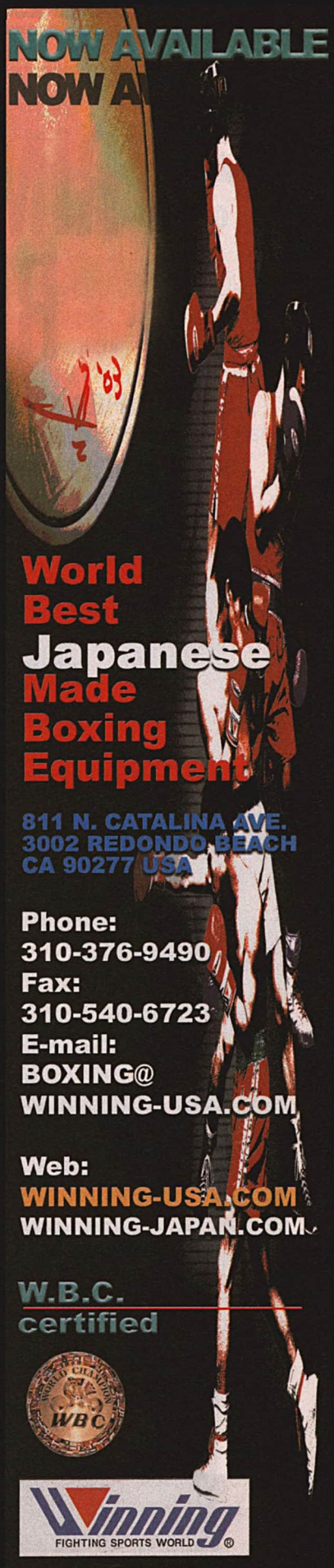
I can see the best version of Martinez outworking and outmaneuvering Saturday's version of Golovkin to a close points win, but my pick would be GGG by late TKO. I think Golovkin's steady pressure, stiff, well-timed jab, accurate power shots, and Maravilla's own warrior spirit would get the better of the Argentine southpaw in a very good fight. Unlike Jacobs, who may have been 10-15 pounds heavier than Golovkin, Martinez didn't have the size to withstand the pressure for 12 rounds.

Regarding Gonzalez-Sor Rungvisai, don't call it a robbery if you think that's being extreme (just call it a gift for Sor Rungvisai). Of course, Gonzalez isn't at his best at 115 pounds. He began his career at 105 pounds and he's had a lot of hard championship fights over the past 8½ years. But the fact that he doesn't dominate as much at 115 as he did the lighter divisions does not negate the fact that he soundly outworked, outjabbed, outslugged and out-landed the Thai challenger.

I agree that Gonzalez was more dominant at junior flyweight and flyweight, but had he stayed at 112 pounds or immediately returned to flyweight after beating Cuadras last year, you know as well as I do that all those hardcore nutcakes hanging out there in comment sections and the Twitterverse would claim he's avoiding your boy Inoue and a rematch with Cuadras.

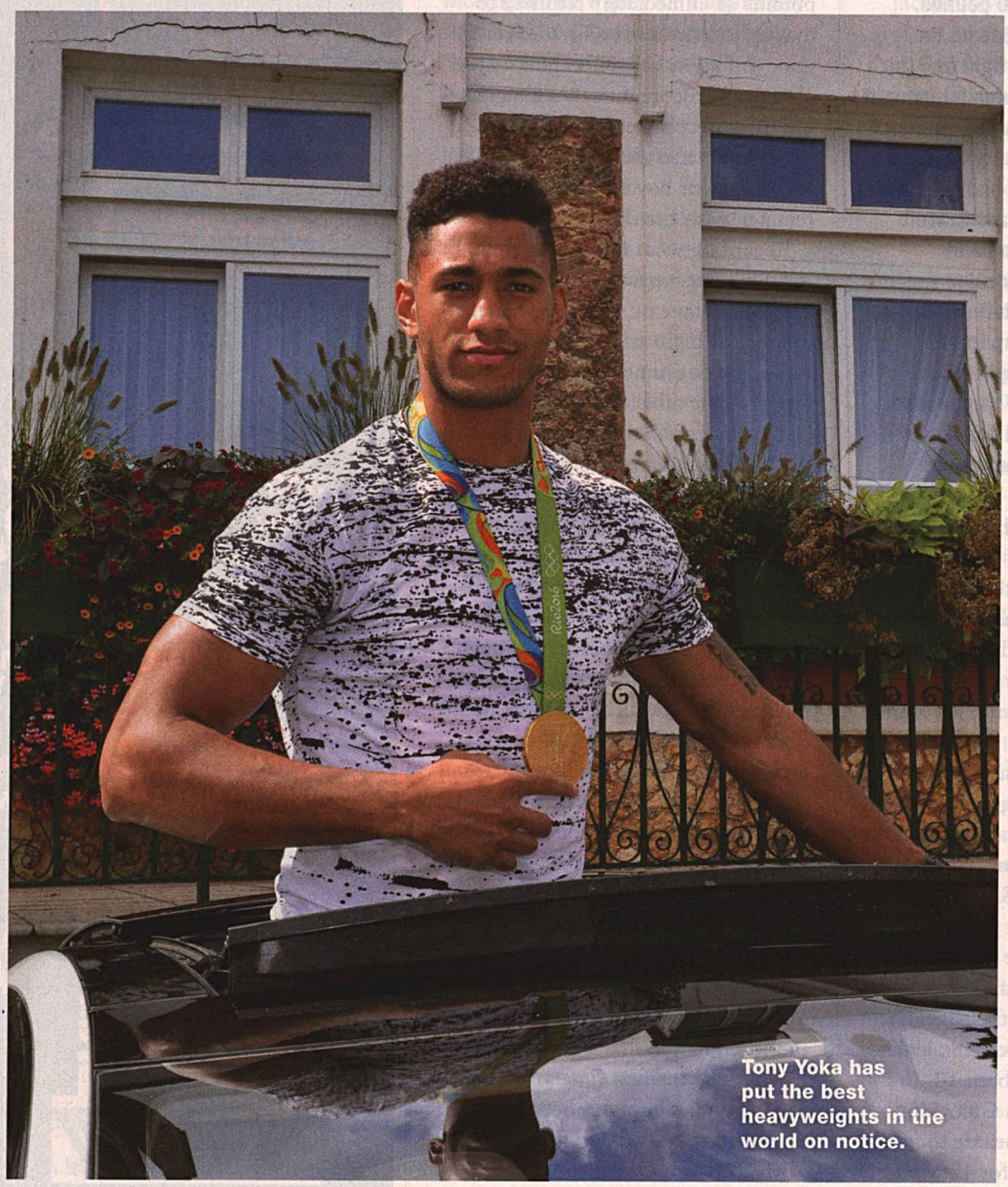
Regarding what Inoue does next, I wouldn't put it past the 23-year-old phenom to take on the Thai veteran despite the high-risk-low-reward stakes the two-time beltholder brings to the table. Inoue doesn't lack confidence. Sor Rungvisai has the WBC belt, which holds a lot of weight in Japan, and a Japan-Thailand rivalry exists. I can see Inoue going for a WBO/WBC title-unification bout, or allowing Gonzalez to try to avenge his loss and then taking on the winner of the rematch. Although I'm sure he's beginning to struggle to make 115 pounds, I don't think he's done with the junior bantamweight division yet. Along with Gonzalez and Sor Rungvisai, there are attractive matchups against Cuadras and Juan Estrada. And with his talent, size and youth, Inoue would likely be favored to win those fights.

Having said that, a showdown between bantamweight king Yamanaka and Inoue is a passing-of-the-torch match that I'd love to see. It would be the first time an all-Japanese matchup was between two pound-for-pound-rated fighters with a RING title on the line.



PRIMED AND READY

SUPER HEAVYWEIGHT OLYMPIC CHAMP **TONY YOKA** HAS A LOT GOING FOR HIM – INCLUDING CONFIDENCE – AS HE PREPARES FOR HIS PRO DEBUT



Tony Yoka has put the best heavyweights in the world on notice.

Tony Yoka doesn't blend into many backgrounds.

The 2016 Olympic super heavyweight champion from France is 6 feet 7 inches and 230 pounds, as well as charismatic and handsome. But on March 2 in a Manhattan hotel ballroom, Yoka sat on a small couch against a wall basically unseen. A few feet away, welterweight champion Keith Thurman fidgeted at a wide table, engulfed by reporters as he held court on his coming battle with Danny Garcia.

Yoka, 24, was recognized by a lone reporter who spotted him sitting with his fellow 2016 Olympic gold medalist and fiancee, Estelle Mossely. Despite his momentary anonymity, Yoka radiated confidence, serving notice to the top professional heavyweights – including titleholder Anthony Joshua – that he doesn't plan on being a bit player.

"They don't have the skill," Yoka said of the division in general, speaking barely above a whisper so as not to disturb Thurman. "Joshua ... I'm happy because he's working. So now he has skill. He's powerful. My skill? I'm born with it

and also with speed. I know I'm the fastest heavyweight in the world.

"I'm the most skilled heavyweight, and I move in the ring with my legs; I don't just fight. I will take my time and when I'm ready, you will know it."

Yoka smiled as he spoke, reveling in the big-fight atmosphere a few feet away, knowing his time will come. He already has a high-powered team behind him. He signed in January with former Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer, who has scheduled his pro debut for June 2 in Paris. He has a deal in place with French broadcaster Canal+. And he's guided by Andre Ward trainer Virgil Hunter, completing the all-star lineup.

"I think I have the best coach for my career," Yoka said. "Richard has a big history. A lot of promoters wanted to sign me. I met a lot of people. When I fight, I need to feel unique. I need my promoter to be focused on me. And Richard showed that he really wanted me. He came to Paris many times. He doesn't live in France but he came. He showed me that he really wanted to work with me."

Yoka is jumping into a revitalized heavyweight division led by Joshua (a fellow Olympic gold medalist to whom he is often compared), Joseph Parker, Deontay Wilder and Wladimir Klitschko. He's familiar with all of them. Yoka called Joshua a friend and Wladimir Klitschko someone who has imparted advice. He beat Parker in the finals of the 2010 Youth Olympics in Singapore "and I know he wants revenge," Yoka said with a laugh.

Despite the friendship with Joshua, Yoka would still fight him.

"We've been friends for a while," Yoka said. "He's very good and has made progress with every fight. But I've been boxing since I was born. Really, for real, I'm not afraid of anybody.

"I'm coming," Yoka continued. "I know they're watching me, too, because they know I'm coming. It's just sports, nothing personal."

Yoka already is well-known in France, the result of his amateur success, but he also wants to conquer the U.S. He spoke of making his U.S. debut later this year, possibly in December after fighting three times in France.

"I know that I'm not a star here," he said of the U.S. market. "I need to build my career. I have a big, big fan base in France. I need to fight there to be a star in my country and then come to the U.S."

Then Yoka got up, shook hands with the reporter and exited the room. No one seemed to notice. That is likely to change in the coming months.

THE ESSENTIALS
TONY YOKA

Age: 24

Weight class: heavyweight

Height: 6 feet 7 inches

Stance: orthodox

Hometown: Paris

Record: Pro debut scheduled for June 2.

Biggest strengths: Yoka is a very skilled heavyweight for his size. He moves well and has unusually fast hands. He can punch on the move, something that not many heavyweights can do, and he seems to have a good chin.

Biggest question marks: Does Yoka move too much? For someone his size, Yoka depends on his legs and movement a lot. It will be fascinating to see how his innate skills translate to the pros, where fights sometimes turn into grinding slugfests.

3 MORE TO WATCH

ROBSON CONCEICAO
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT

Conceicao (3-0, 2 KOs) is a highly touted prospect, having captured a gold medal this past summer in the 2016 Rio Games for his native Brazil at lightweight and signing with Bob Arum's Top Rank. He's a sharpshooter, adept at counterpunching, as he showed in a second-round stoppage of Aaron Hollis on March 17 at Madison Square Garden's Theater.

SERHII BOHACHUK
WELTERWEIGHT

The Abel Sanchez-trained Bohachuk (3-0, 3 KOs), of Ukraine, remained undefeated with a third-round stoppage of Yasmani Pedroso on March 18 on the undercard of Gennady Golovkin-Daniel Jacobs. Bohachuk is a master of distance and has a slicing overhand right, which he uses off the jab. He's aggressive, but not carelessly so, constantly measuring and probing his opponent for openings before unleashing his attack.

SEAN MCGOLDRICK
BANTAMWEIGHT

McGoldrick, a 2010 Commonwealth Games champion and 2014 bronze medalist, signed a promotional deal with Matchroom Boxing in March. He is a compact fighter with an aggressive style, an educated left hook and good counter right. He's usually the one initiating the action, which should make him a fan-friendly fighter in the paid ranks.

 By Thomas Gerbasi

Amanda Serrano made the most of her showcase in January, outpointing Yazmin Rivas.

FIRST SHOT FIRED

AMANDA SERRANO'S APPEARANCE ON SHOWTIME KICKED OFF WHAT PROMISES TO BE A BIG YEAR FOR WOMEN'S BOXING

Amanda Serrano had been here before. She had heard the promises and then saw them broken so many times before, so when the first defense of her WBO junior featherweight title against Yazmin Rivas was slated to be broadcast January 14 on Showtime Extreme – making it the first nationally televised women's title bout in nearly 10 years – she was understandably skeptical.

Even on fight night.

"It wasn't until I was in the locker room the night of the fight that I actually knew this was happening," Serrano said with a laugh. "We heard so many stories in the past and we had our hopes up, and it never came through. But finally, when the night was over and I was finally on Showtime Extreme, we could finally say, 'Wow, it happened, we did it.'"

When Serrano says "we," she isn't just referring to her family and her team. On that night at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, her hometown, the 28-year-old was fighting for every woman who laces up the gloves and wants the recognition and paydays they deserve. This was a big deal, and it wasn't lost on the four-division world champion.

"I tried not to put too much pressure on myself because then I wouldn't perform the way I did, but in the back of my mind, I was like, 'Yes, this is for women's boxing and this is for me.'"

She delivered, scoring a clear-cut decision win over Rivas. It wasn't a typical Serrano result, as she has ended 23 of her 31 pro wins by knockout. But after injuring her hand in the first third of the fight, she went to Plan B and showed she

could box if necessary.

And when the final bell rang, Serrano heard it from the fans, as well as her peers.

"I had a lot of positive feedback," she said. "Even girls that wanted to fight me in the past were saying, 'Wow, you did a helluva job, I'm so proud of you.' And that's a great accomplishment because this is hard work and we're all doing it for the same reasons and trying to get recognition, and it finally happened."

Serrano's appearance on Showtime Extreme was the first salvo in what is shaping up to be the most important year in the history of women's boxing. Two-time Olympic gold medalist Claressa Shields headlined Showtime's ShoBox event on March 10, European Olympic stars Katie Taylor and Nicola Adams are making noise overseas and pound-for-pound queen Cecilia Braekhus will face another member of the P4P list, Erica Anabella Farias, in June.

The talent level in the sport is higher than it's ever been, a point that isn't lost on Serrano's longtime trainer and manager, Jordan Maldonado.

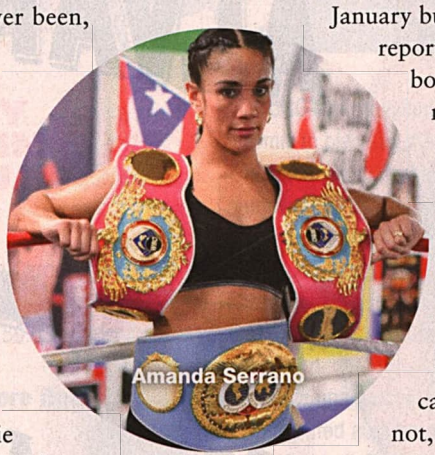
"The game is over because now you have real talent coming up," he said. "In order to compete with Katie Taylor, Claressa Shields, Marlen Esparza and Nicola Adams, you're gonna need more than to be a female with a sports bra and boxing gloves. These girls are legitimate fighters. They're not taking on these 1-17 fighters. These girls are coming right away and they're talented enough to take on really good fighters. So you step up or move out of the way because within the next six or seven months, all these other girls are not even going to be remembered because they're going to get lost in the reality of the sport.

"The sport is requiring that the real fighters step up."

Serrano is one of those real fighters and a secret no longer. She made it through the hard times, held off the temptation to make a move to mixed martial arts and now she will get her platform to show what she can do under the bright lights. So who's her ideal dance partner?

"I would definitely love to fight Jelena Mrdjenovich," she said without hesitation. "She's a great fighter, a great champion and people compare us because we have a lot of power and a lot of knockouts."

I reminded her that a RING column last year listed Serrano-Mrdjenovich as one of the fights that needed to happen now. Two other matchups on that list – Hardy-Vincent and Braekhus-Farias – have already happened or are signed to take place. The Serrano-Mrdjenovich fight could have joined them in January but Mrdjenovich reportedly turned the bout down over money issues.


Amanda Serrano

Serrano admits that she "was pretty disappointed" but she's also hopeful that the fight with the Canadian star can happen soon. If not, there's always the pursuit of a fifth divisional crown at 118 pounds and the realization that whatever happens from here, at least the world will be paying attention.

"There were times when I didn't even want to do it anymore because I was doing all this hard work and nothing was paying off," she said. "But you have to endure all that for what's happening now. Now it's exciting and I can't wait to see where this can take all the females." RING

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

CECILIA BRAEKHUS
UD OVER KLARA SVENSSON

It could have been a letdown for Cecilia Braekhus, the perfect opportunity for Sweden's Klara Svensson to swoop in and remove four major welterweight titles from the grasp of the "First Lady." Instead, following the emotional high of her first fight in her home country of Norway last October, Braekhus kept her foot on the gas with a near shutout win over Svensson. Next up for Braekhus is a June 9 superfight against Argentina's Erica Anabella Farias, a 140-pound world champion who is making the move up to 147 pounds.

POUND FOR POUND

1. **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 30-0 (8 KOs)
Welterweight
2. **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 38-1 (16 KOs)
Lightweight
3. **YESICA YOLANDA BOPP**
Argentina • 30-1 (12 KOs)
Junior flyweight
4. **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
Canada • 37-10-1 (19 KOs)
Featherweight
5. **JESSICA CHAVEZ**
Mexico • 28-4-3 (4 KOs)
Flyweight
6. **ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS**
Argentina • 24-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight
7. **IBETH ZAMORA SILVA**
Mexico • 27-5 (12 KOs)
Junior flyweight
8. **AMANDA SERRANO**
U.S. • 31-1-1 (23 KOs)
Featherweight
9. **LAYLA MCCARTER**
U.S. • 38-13-5 (9 KOs)
Lightweight
10. **ZULINA MUNOZ**
Mexico • 48-1-2 (28 KOs)
Junior bantamweight

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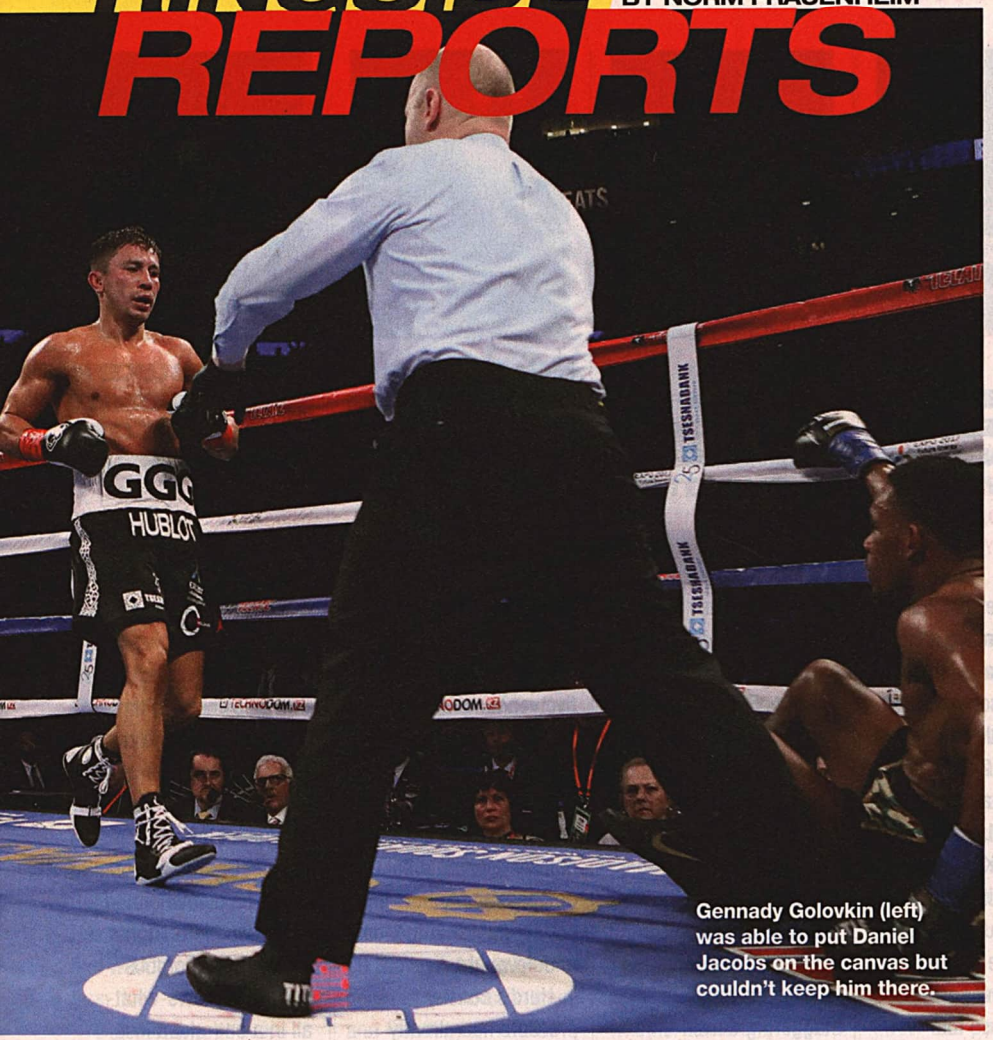
RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM



Gennady Golovkin (left) was able to put Daniel Jacobs on the canvas but couldn't keep him there.

GENNADY GOLOVKIN UD 12 DANIEL JACOBS

Date: March 18
Site: Madison Square Garden, New York
Division: Middleweight
Weights: Golovkin 159.6 pounds, Jacobs 159.8
RING ratings (before fight): Golovkin No. 1, Jacobs No. 2
Network: HBO PPV

It was a different Gennady Golovkin. One nobody had ever seen. But there he was, in a round he had never experienced. The 12th had been scheduled many times. But GGG never got there. He just didn't need it.

Daniel Jacobs changed all of that, forcing Golovkin to go the distance and into the nerve-wracking experience of having to hear his fate determined by subjective scores announced after the final bell.

GGG still prevailed, his perfect record as firmly in place as the initials that serve as his nickname. His long-term goal of finally unifying all of the middleweight titles is still there, possibly against WBO beltholder Billy Joe Saunders at home in Kazakhstan in June. He got the decision, unanimously: 115-112 on two cards and 114-113 on the third.

Less unanimous, however, is the undisputed aura he possessed before the opening bell. Back then, he was more than unbeaten. He was considered unstoppable. That's not so clear anymore, mostly because the resilient Jacobs, who at fight time was bigger at an estimated 180 pounds and, despite getting knocked down in the fourth with a couple of right hands, looked stronger in shaking off just about everything Golovkin threw.

That knockdown seemed to presage the stoppage that had become almost a GGG routine. Golovkin (37-0, 33 knockouts) had scored 23 successive KOs. No. 24 looked inevitable. But Jacobs, nicknamed "The Miracle Man" after overcoming cancer in 2011, looked at GGG after the knockdown and smiled as if to say he had faced a lot worse.

"After the knockdown, I told him he had to kill me," Jacobs told reporters during a post-fight news conference when he also said he thought he won the fight. "He's not this boogeyman, this knockout artist. When I got up, I thought: 'This is all he has?' There were many times during the fight I went toe-to-toe, because I knew I could."

Jacobs' performance might have left some other people wondering whether they could do the same and maybe more. People like Canelo Alvarez. For the last couple of years, there's been a lot of futile talk about a Canelo-GGG showdown. That fight has yet to happen, in part, say Canelo's critics, because Golden Boy Promotions hasn't been willing to risk a loss for their 26-year-old cash cow against the dreaded GGG.

But maybe Jacobs stripped away that alleged fear. If so, Jacobs might have done Golovkin a big favor.

"We hope the other fighters think that Gennady's not as dangerous anymore, so now they'll sign a contract instead of just talking about fighting," said Golovkin promoter Tom Loeffler, who didn't name anybody in particular and didn't have to.

In the end, GGG could have emerged from the close contest smarter and wiser. It's hard to be a championship fighter with so few championship rounds on the resume. In hindsight, CompuBox also seemed to support the judges. In total punches, GGG landed 56 more than Jacobs. In jabs, it was no contest: GGG landed 74 more than his rival, displaying some slick versatility and durability few have ever seen.

Then again, nobody had ever seen him go 12 rounds, either. »

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.

ADRIEN BRONER SD 10 NO. 3 ADRIAN GRANADOS

Feb. 18, Cincinnati (Showtime)

"AB," Adrien Broner's mocked monogram, moved onto the alphabet's third letter. That's "C" for comeback. It's a step Broner never envisioned when his initials and ambition were About Billions. But after flushing away cash and nearly his career amid trash-talk and jail time, he left no other option.

The restart came against Adrian Granados in a fight tougher than anticipated. Broner (33-2, 24 KOs) injured his left hand early and then battled to win a split decision over Granados (18-5-2, 12 KOs), a longtime friend.

"Adrian is world class," said Broner, who won on two cards, 97-93 and 96-94, and lost on the third, 97-93. "Guys duck him."

Question is, would Broner duck a rematch? Granados earned one. But Broner has name recognition. He already was being mentioned as a possibility for Terence Crawford, Manny Pacquiao, Keith Thurman and Ricky Burns.

NO. 4 ELEIDER ALVAREZ TKO 5 LUCIAN BUTE

Feb. 24, Quebec City (Canal Indigo, Shaw TV, Bell TV/PPV)

Eleider Alvarez did the expected, winning a so-called elimination bout that earned him some money – but still no title shot.

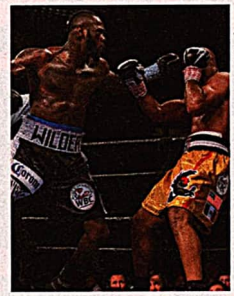
Alvarez (22-0, 11 KOs) scored a fifth-round stoppage of Lucian Bute (32-4-1, 25 KOs), an ex-168-pound titleholder who turned 37 four days after losing for the fourth time in his last seven bouts.

After a close four rounds, Alvarez finished Bute with successive right hands at 2:22 of the fifth.

"I've been practicing that move for a long time," Alvarez said.

He'll have more time to practice.

The victory was supposed to set Alvarez up for a shot at WBC light heavyweight champ Adonis Stevenson. But Stevenson already has plans for an April 29 bout against Sean Monaghan in New York. In mid-March, Alvarez agreed to step aside for an undisclosed sum.



NO. 2 DEONTAY WILDER TKO 5 GERALD WASHINGTON

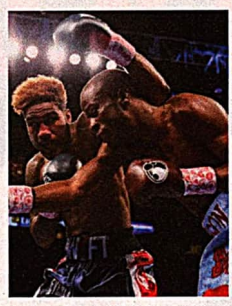
Feb. 25, Birmingham, Ala. (Fox)

Mention Deontay Wilder and there's an immediate debate about what's missing. From footwork to tactical skill, it's a long list. But there's something else missing. Losses.

That "0" adds up to the reason Wilder is so compelling. His right hand is a dramatic equalizer, even after surgery.

It landed once again, staggering Gerald Washington (18-1-1, 12 KO) and leaving him defenseless for a left that would set up the ending at 1:45 of the fifth round. It lifted Wilder, the WBC champ, to 38-0, including 37 stoppages, a 97 percent KO rate that ranks as the best in history among elite heavyweights.

With attention on the Anthony Joshua-Wladimir Klitschko bout, it also was a sure sign that Wilder, who trailed on two cards, is still a player despite surgery on his right hand and biceps after a July victory over Chris Arreola.



NO. 9 JARRETT HURD TKO 9 TONY HARRISON

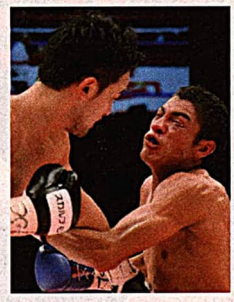
Feb. 25, Birmingham, Ala. (Fox)

Jarrett Hurd was studying a different kind of fighting as a volunteer fireman five years ago. Then he decided to give up one tough trade for another.

As a full-time student in the sweet science, Hurd quickly became a hot prospect and is now the hottest fighter in the junior middleweight division.

Hurd's constant pressure had already taken its toll when his right hand floored Harrison late in the ninth round. Harrison got up just in time but made it clear he didn't want to continue by spitting out his mouthpiece. And just like that, Hurd won his first major title, one that had become available when Jermall Charlo moved to middleweight.

"I can finally pull my pants up now," said Hurd (20-0, 14 KOs). "My pants were falling down, but I finally got my belt."



C SHINSUKE YAMANAKA TKO 7 CARLOS CARLSON

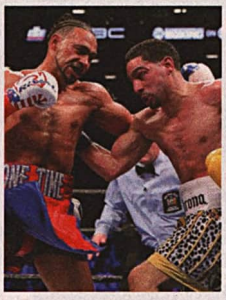
March 2, Tokyo (Nippon TV)

Shinsuke Yamanaka must feel blessed. After all, he calls his best punch "God's Left." But that blessing isn't limited to just one hand. Turns out, Yamanaka is blessed in a lot of ways.

At least he was against Carlos Carlson, who was overwhelmed by blessed lefts, rights, three-punch combos and who-knows-what-all in a one-sided loss to Yamanaka (27-0-2, 19 KOs) in the bantamweight's 12th successive defense of his WBC belt – the second-longest title reign in Japanese history

Referee Ian John Lewis said last rites to the scheduled 12-rounder after Carlson (22-2, 13 KOs), of Tijuana, hit the canvas for the fifth time at 57 seconds of the seventh.

"In the seventh round, my right was good from the beginning, and when I use my right better, it usually leads me to land my left," said Yamanaka, a 34-year-old fighter who has never fought outside of Japan.



NO. 2 KEITH THURMAN SD 12 NO. 7 DANNY GARCIA

March 4, Brooklyn, N.Y. (CBS)

History can wait. Other than unifying two welterweight belts, little was accomplished in Keith Thurman's victory over Danny Garcia.

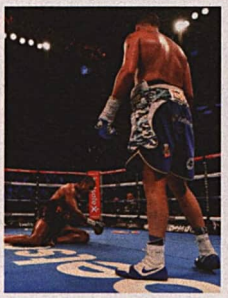
Thurman played it safe, winning a split decision in a fight that beforehand had promoters talking about Sugar Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns in 1981. The WBC and WBA titles were at stake then, too.

But those belts were just costume jewelry in the bigger drama played out in Leonard's victory, a 14th-round stoppage. That one is remembered for what happened. Titles were incidental.

"I thought it was a clear victory," said Thurman (28-0, 22 KOs), who backed off late, beating Garcia (33-1, 19 KOs) on two cards, 116-112 and 115-113, and losing, 115-113, on the third.

Maybe, although Garcia's dad and trainer, Angel, complained about Thurman's "running."

But there was no debate about the CBS telecast. It was clear a victory: a peak of 5 million-plus viewers, a rare success story for boxing in Saturday's prime-time slot.



(NO. 3 CRUISERWEIGHT) TONY BELLEW TKO 11 NO. 7 DAVID HAYE

March 4, London (Sky Sports)

Tony Bellew had a role in "Creed," a 2015 "Rocky" sequel. But it was no act. Boxing is only a role for fools and fakers. Bellew is neither. He's real at any weight.

This time, heavyweight.

Bellew, the WBC's cruiserweight titleholder, stunned David Haye (28-3, 26 KOs), knocking him down in the seventh round and finishing him in the 11th. Before the opening bell, Haye talked trash. In the sixth round, he ruptured his right Achilles tendon. After the bout, he talked about how he had endured and why he wants a rematch. Haye is always talking, being the celebrity that Bellew is not.

"One guy trains to have a beautiful body and one guy trains to fight to the finish, and that showed," said Bellew (29-2-1, 19 KOs) after overcoming a broken hand with sustained power that drove Haye through the ropes, prompting his corner to surrender at 2:16 of the 11th.

NO. 4 DAVID LEMIEUX KO 3 CURTIS STEVENS

March 11, Verona, N.Y. (HBO)

It was scary. It was beautiful. One punch from David Lemieux defined the singular expression of what power means and can do.

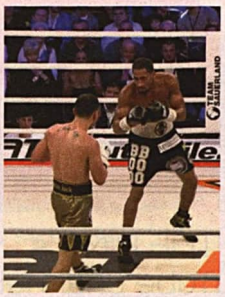
Lemieux (37-3, 33 KOs) landed a left, a shot as sudden as it was precise and so loaded with danger that it left Curtis Stevens unconscious and seemingly in peril to an anxious crowd not sure whether to cheer or mourn.

"Joy and relief," Lemieux manager Camille Estephan told the Montreal Gazette of his feelings at the moment – 1:59 of the third round – when Lemieux's blow sent Stevens crashing onto the canvas. "Then, serious concern. I thought he could be dead."

Minutes later, Stevens (29-6, 21 KOs) regained consciousness. He was carried out of the ring on a stretcher and released from a hospital later that night.

"I'm good y'all," Stevens said in a tweet. "I got caught real good."

Real good to hear, too.



NO. 5 DEMETRIUS ANDRADE SD 12 JACK CULCAY

March 11, Ludwigshafen, Germany (Sky Sports)

Demetrius Andrade did what he hasn't been doing for the last three years. He got busy.

Andrade, who fought only three times in more than three years, was a whirlwind, scoring often enough for a split-decision victory over former amateur rival Jack Culcay.

According to CompuBox, Andrade threw 953 punches over the 12 rounds.

"I thought I did everything that I needed to do," said Andrade (24-0, 16 KOs), a Providence, Rhode Island, fighter who was stripped of a title in 2015 for inactivity.

There were moments, however, when it looked as if the decision might go against Andrade. He won 116-112 on two cards; Culcay (22-2, 11 KOs) won on the third, 115-114.

At 29, Andrade knows it's time to get busy against the best in the junior middleweight division.

"Line them up," he said.

NO. 4 SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI MD 12 NO. 2 ROMAN GONZALEZ

March 18, New York (HBO PPV)

It was controversial. It was even a little sad. It was also a reminder about why there are weight classes. It was a lot of things. Mostly, it was the end of Roman Gonzalez's improbable pound-for-pound reign.

For 17 months, Gonzalez (46-1, 38 KOs) was the smallest to ever rank No. 1. He was a huge talent in a small body. Still is.

The skills were evident, yet not enough against Srisaket Sor Rungvisai (42-4-1, 38 KOs), who dropped him in the first round, bloodied him in the third with a head-butt and somehow did enough over the next nine to win a majority decision, 114-112 on two cards and 113-113 on the third.

How anybody loses while landing 441 punches, according to CompuBox, is anybody's guess. But that's what happened in Gonzalez's only defeat in the ex-flyweight's second bout at junior bantamweight.

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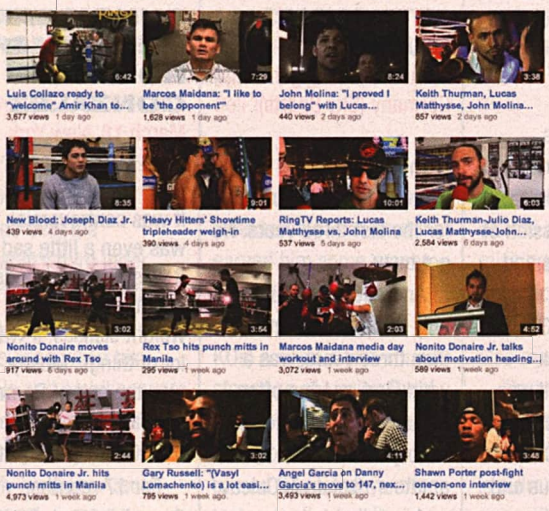

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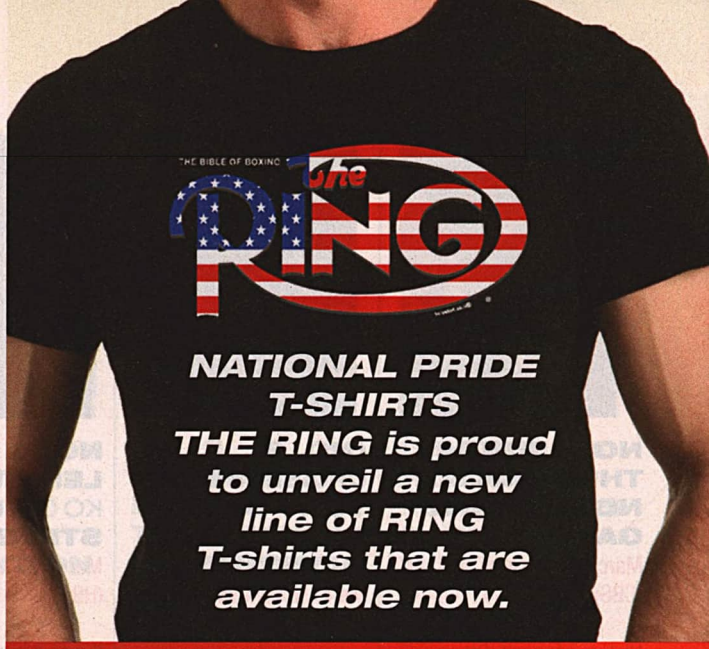

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COMING UP

Predictions are made by RING staff members Mitch Abramson, Doug Fischer, Brian Harty and Michael Rosenthal

APRIL

ANTHONY JOSHUA VS. WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

Date: April 29
Location: Wembley Stadium, London
Division: Heavyweights (for Joshua's IBF and vacant WBA titles)
RING Ratings: Klitschko No. 1; Joshua No. 5
TV: Sky Box Office (U.K.)
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Katie Taylor vs. TBA, lightweights.
Significance: This fight could determine the immediate future of the division. If Joshua (18-0, 18 KOs) wins, a new era will have begun in earnest. If Klitschko (64-4, 53 KOs) wins, the division will look a lot like it did for a decade. Joshua has rolled over his foes but has never faced anyone near Klitschko's ability. Klitschko looked his age in a one-sided loss to Tyson Fury in his last fight, in November 2015. That's a long layoff, particularly for a 41-year-old.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Joshua KO 7; Fischer – Joshua SD; Harty – Klitschko SD; Abramson – Joshua KO 5

APRIL 8 – Vasyl Lomachenko (No. 1, No. 6 P4P) vs. Jason Sosa (No. 10), junior lightweights (for Lomachenko's WBA and WBO titles, Oxon Hill, Md. (HBO). Also, Oleksandr Usyk (No. 1) vs. Michael Hunter, cruiserweights (for Usyk's WBO title), and Oleksandr Gvozdyk (No. 8) vs. Yunieski Gonzalez, light heavyweights.

APRIL 8 – Terry Flanagan (No. 2) vs. Petr Petrov (No. 10), lightweights (for Flanagan's WBO title) Manchester, England. Also, Liam Williams vs. Liam Smith (No. 8), junior middleweights; Zolani Tete (No. 8) vs. Arthur Villanueva, bantamweights; and Jack Catterall (No. 7) vs. Martin Gethin, junior welterweights.

APRIL 9 – Josesito Lopez vs. Saul Corral, welterweights, Los Angeles (Fox Sports 1/Fox Deportes).

APRIL 9 – Nehomar Cermeno vs. Shun Kubo, junior featherweights, Osaka, Japan.

APRIL 14 – Dmitry Bivol vs. Samuel Clarkson, light heavyweights, Oxon Hill, Md. (Showtime).

APRIL 14 – L.A. Fight Club: Ivan Delgado vs. Charles Huerta, junior lightweights, Los Angeles (RingTV.com; Estrella TV).

APRIL 15 – Ricky Burns (No. 4) vs. Julius Indongo (No. 6), junior welterweights (for Indongo's IBF and Burns' WBA titles), Glasgow, Scotland (Sky).

APRIL 20 – Michael Perez vs. Marcelino Lopez, lightweights, Verona, New York (ESPN2/ ESPN Deportes).

APRIL 22 – Oscar Valdez (No. 7) vs. Miguel Marriaga, featherweights (for Valdez's WBO title), Carson, California (Top Rank Pay-Per-View). Also, Gilberto Ramirez (No. 3) vs. Max Bursak, super middleweights (for Ramirez's WBO title), and Jessie Magdaleno (No. 2) vs. Adeilson Dos Santos, junior featherweights (for Magdaleno's WBO title).

APRIL 22 – Shawn Porter (No. 3) vs. Andre Berto, welterweights, New York (Showtime). Also, Jermell Charlo (No. 4) vs. Charles Hatley, junior middleweights (for Charlo's WBC title).

APRIL 22 – Arthur Abraham (No. 8) vs. Robin Krasniqi, super middleweights, Germany.

APRIL 22 – Avtandil Khurtsidze (No. 8) vs. Tommy Langford, middleweights, Leicester, England.

APRIL 23 – Kazuto Ioka (No. 1) vs. Noknoi Sitthiprasert, flyweights (for Ioka's WBA title), Osaka, Japan. Also, Marlon Tapales (No. 5) vs. Shohei Omori, bantamweights (for Tapales' WBO title).

APRIL 29 – Adonis Stevenson vs. Sean Monaghan, light heavyweights (for Stevenson's WBC title), Long Island, N.Y.

APRIL 29 – Donnie Nietes (No. 3) vs. Komgrich Nantapech, flyweights (for vacant IBF title), Cebu City, Philippines.

MAY

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.

Date: May 6
Location: T-Mobile Arena, Las Vegas
Division: Super middleweights (catchweight of 164.5 pounds)
RING Ratings: Alvarez C middleweight, No. 1 junior middleweight, No. 8 P4P
TV: HBO Pay-Per-View
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: David Lemieux vs. Marcos Reyes, middleweights; Lucas Matthysse vs. Emmanuel Taylor, welterweights; Joseph Diaz Jr. vs. Manuel Avila, featherweights.
Significance: Canelo (48-1-1, 34 KOs) sets up a showdown with Gennady Golovkin if he beats his Mexican rival in a huge fight among Mexican fans. And most believe he will. Canelo has all the advantages except size. Chavez (50-2-1, 32 KOs) is not known for his work ethic but he'll be motivated for this one. A victory would turn his career completely around.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Alvarez KO 9; Fischer – Alvarez UD; Harty – Alvarez KO 9; Abramson – Alvarez UD

MAY 5 – Golden Boy on ESPN (ESPN/ESPN Deportes).

MAY 6 – Joseph Parker (No. 6) vs. Hughie Fury, heavyweights (for Parker's WBO title), Auckland, New Zealand.

MAY 6 – Zou Shiming (No. 8) vs. TBA, flyweights (for Zou's WBO title), Macao, China.

MAY 13 – Khalid Yafai vs. Suguru Muranaka, junior bantamweights (for Yafai's WBA title), Birmingham, England.

MAY 13 – Josh Warrington vs. Kiko Martinez, featherweights, Leeds, England.

MAY 18 – Golden Boy on ESPN (ESPN/ESPN Deportes).

MAY 20 – Terence Crawford (C, No. 8 P4P) vs. Felix Diaz, junior welterweights (for Crawford's RING, WBC and WBO titles), Newark, New Jersey (HBO).

MAY 20 – Noel Gevor vs. Krzysztof Wlodarczyk, cruiserweights, Poznan, Poland.

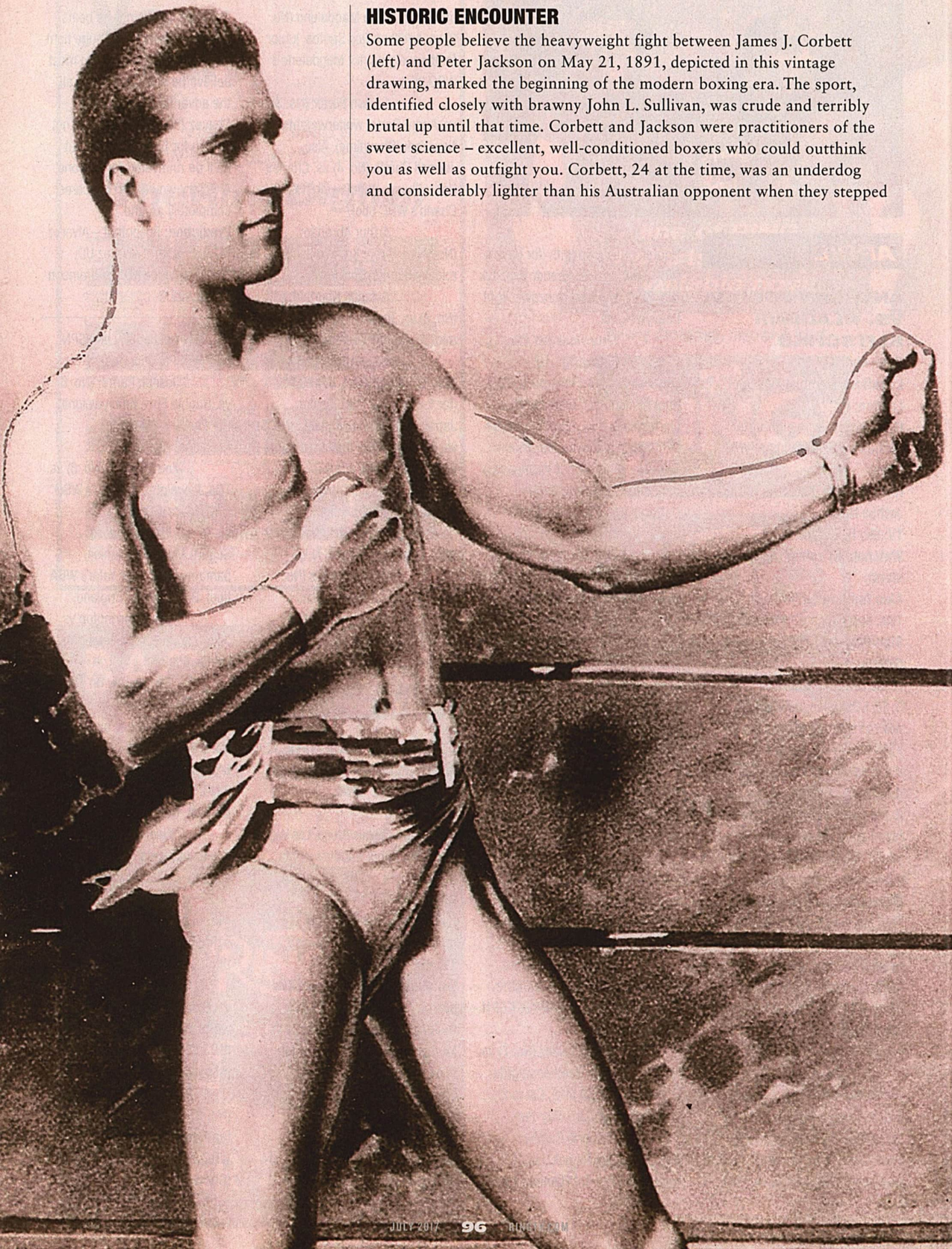
MAY 20 – Gervonta Davis (No. 6) vs. Liam Walsh, junior lightweights (for Davis' IBF title), London.

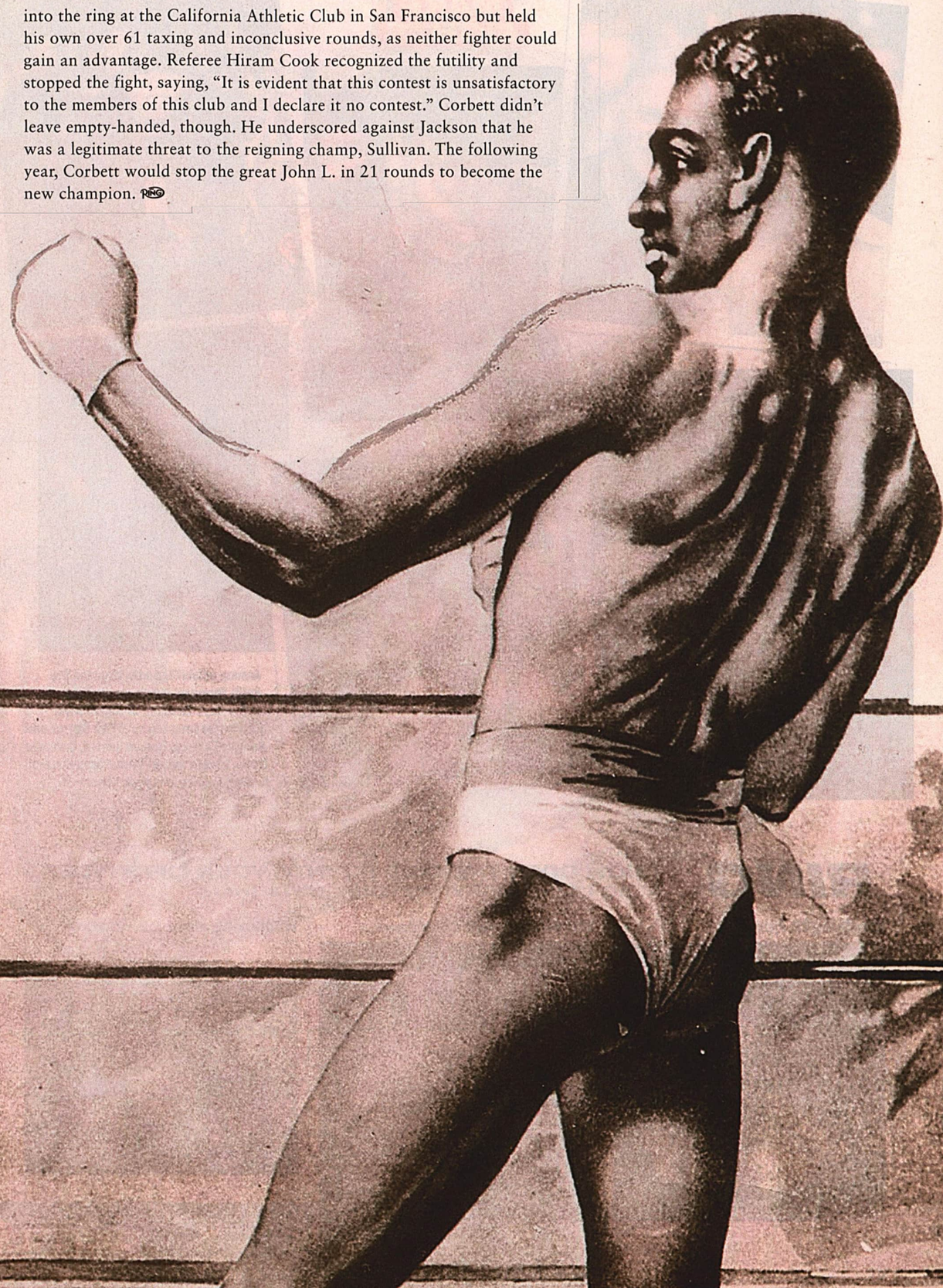
MAY 27 – Kell Brook (No. 2) vs. Errol Spence Jr. (No. 7), welterweights (for Brook's IBF title, Sheffield, England (Showtime).

MAY 27 – Gary Russell Jr. (No. 2) vs. Oscar Escandon, featherweights (for Russell's WBC title), Oxon Hill, Md. (Showtime).

HISTORIC ENCOUNTER

Some people believe the heavyweight fight between James J. Corbett (left) and Peter Jackson on May 21, 1891, depicted in this vintage drawing, marked the beginning of the modern boxing era. The sport, identified closely with brawny John L. Sullivan, was crude and terribly brutal up until that time. Corbett and Jackson were practitioners of the sweet science – excellent, well-conditioned boxers who could outthink you as well as outfight you. Corbett, 24 at the time, was an underdog and considerably lighter than his Australian opponent when they stepped into the ring at the California Athletic Club in San Francisco but held his own over 61 taxing and inconclusive rounds, as neither fighter could gain an advantage. Referee Hiram Cook recognized the futility and stopped the fight, saying, "It is evident that this contest is unsatisfactory to the members of this club and I declare it no contest." Corbett didn't leave empty-handed, though. He underscored against Jackson that he was a legitimate threat to the reigning champ, Sullivan. The following year, Corbett would stop the great John L. in 21 rounds to become the new champion. RING

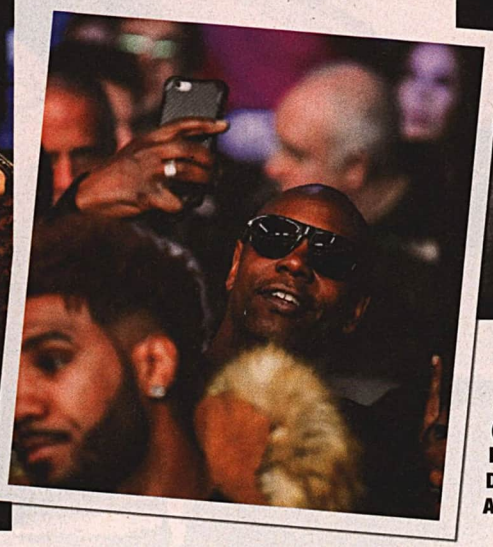


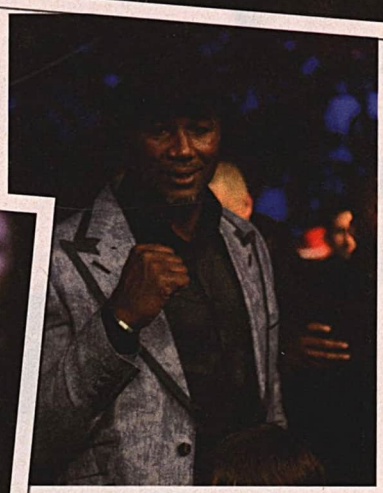


#ATTHEFIGHTS

By **Lamar Clark**

STYLES MAKE FIGHTS





Among celebrities who attended the Keith Thurman-Danny Garcia fight at Barclays Center in Brooklyn were (clockwise from top left): Phil Simms and Boomer Esiason, Romeo Santos, Gervonta Davis, Lennox Lewis, Dave Chappelle, and Andrzej Fonfara and Amir Khan.

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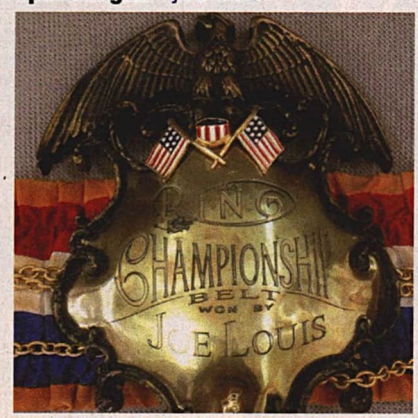

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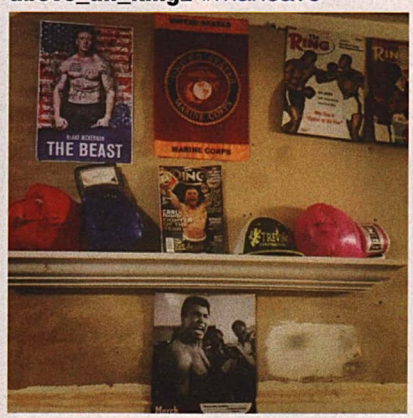

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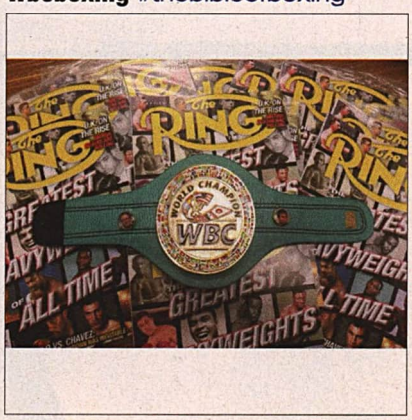

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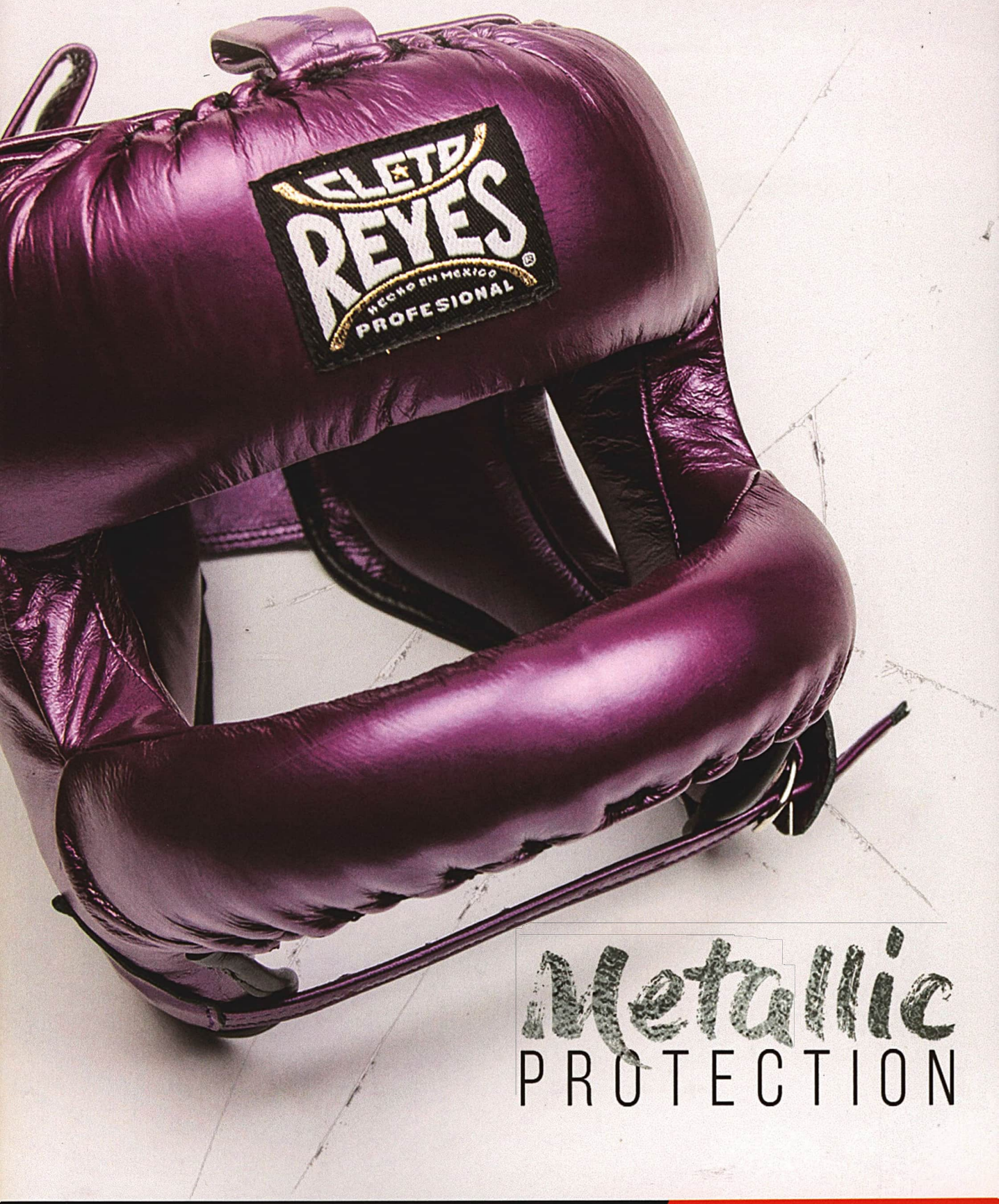

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